

Chapter 11

SUPPORTING SERVICE PROVIDERS

Themes in this chapter

- Staff awareness and competencies to act on race equality
- Data dependency
- Ethnicity record keeping and monitoring
- Outreach and consultation
- Impact Assessment
- Improving feedback and listening ✕.

Introduction

In chapter 2, we set out the brief for the research including the need to recommend the kinds of support required by service providers in order to help them respond to the recommendations arising from the work with Black and Minority Ethnic participants.

To this end, the brief for the research with service providers included:

- research with service-providing staff amongst the breadth of agencies operating in rural areas to assess and acknowledge the help they needed in addressing race equality
- provision of research findings and development of recommendations for action that address the concerns of Black and Minority Ethnic people and give service providers rurally relevant guidance
- development of a business plan for the Racial Equality Council that would drive its future rural work and set the basis for rural partnerships with other Agencies.

The research responded to the brief with the following information outputs:

➔ The business plan was produced as part of the Rural Outreach Project, and is a separate document which can be found at the Racial Equality Council's website www.DevonREC.org Please refer to this document to find out more about the REC's plans for the next 3 years.

➔ During the 3 years of research, the project worked with a range of service-providers to give them advice as it emerged from the research, and helped develop projects and bids for concrete action on the ground. A list of this work is set out in chapter 2.

→ The final findings and recommendations that are rurally relevant to service providers are provided in four places in this handbook:

1. This chapter provides a specific focus on the issues raised by service-providers themselves
2. Information that will help service providers is laid out as part of the emerging discussion within the various chapters in this handbook
3. Chapter 12 looks in particular at the recommendations that were made specifically by the participants themselves to guide priorities for action.
4. The Summary Report provides an overview of all the key findings and recommendations.

The brief for work with service-providers was fulfilled over the 3 years of the project by listening to staff concerns among a range of service providers through workshops, meetings and phone discussions with over 180 staff.

It became clear very early on in the research that most service-providing staff struggled with knowing how to respond in the rural setting to race equality. It also became clear that most organisations had little clarity internally about what was going on in terms of race equality, especially within larger organisations. This situation began to change somewhat towards the end of the project when the effect of the Race Relations Amendment Act (2000) was beginning to focus Public Bodies in response to their Specific Duty under the Act to produce a Race Equality Scheme. However, it was still clear that in many organisations, information about race equality procedures and action was not transmitted to staff. In the wake of the amended legislation, Inspectorates and Government support agencies such as the Audit Commission and DIALOG then set about conducting their own research into organisations' race equality practice, to check for, encourage and chivvy action.

Amidst this flux it was decided that a systematic audit of organisational practice was an inappropriate focus for the Rural Outreach Project's research. Instead the project concentrated on developing an understanding of service providers' common difficulties and of the support they felt they needed in addressing race equality issues in rural areas. There was a general feeling among these participants that a frank recognition of the difficulties that individual staff faced was needed as a starting point for overcoming institutional inaction. Whilst the research did hear from some staff who were evasive and even hostile about the issues, the majority of staff were frustrated by their organisation's inertia. Most displayed real

interest in the issues and a desire to be told how they could engage and take action.

What were the issues for service providers?

For many of the service-providing staff we spoke to, the change in legislation was welcomed in principle, albeit not understood in practical terms. Most knew by professional instinct more than by awareness of the Act that they should be doing something, but overwhelmingly they wanted help with the *how*. Many staff frankly described the difficulty of starting from a base of ignorance and lack of exposure to issues of race inequality, and the majority had not read or had sight of their organisation's race equality policies or schemes. Some others were able to suggest ideas for action themselves, but had had no influence in promoting these ideas within their own organisations. Most staff also felt that their best intentions were frustrated by the rural nature of the Black and Minority Ethnic population: Without geographic communities or community organisations to refer to, staff felt at a loss to know how to reach out to Black and Minority Ethnic people and improve service/user relations. Such reactions summed up the overall picture of the situation described by frontline service-providing staff.

There are a number of direct and obvious responses to this overview.

➔ The first is to underline the need for staff training that has a practical, competency based and rurally relevant curriculum. Training tailored to specific needs is available locally from the Devon Racial Equality Council which commissioned this research. Organisations who commission training from urban or national sources should question the extent to which the training offered addresses rural issues.

➔ A similarly obvious response is to stress the need for communication of policies in a manner that actually gets to staff and helps them to absorb it. Only organisations themselves will be able to sit down and look at their communication and team structures, in order to assess how best to get information to staff. But a good starting point in making that judgement is to ask staff what information they do listen to (and why), how they get hold of it, and where they gather to discuss it with each other.

➔ Two other key responses include: supporting the use of staff ideas by improving the effectiveness and reputation of staff suggestion schemes within organisations; and appointing or recruiting *competent* staff as Race

Equality Champions/Advisors to improve flow of ideas to and from staff as well as to deal with instances where race inequality is identified.

➔ The issue of overcoming outreach to and dialogue with the Black and Minority Ethnic community is not something that can be addressed without multi-agency effort and a commitment to building Multi-Ethnic infrastructure in rural areas. On this issue a single, major proposal is made in this research. The recommendation is that agencies collaborate to fund the appointment of specialist race equality community development workers in each District to facilitate rural multi-ethnic networks and activities, and to build the basis upon which Black and Minority Ethnic rural people can derive peer support, self-organise and engage with service providers. This proposal is discussed further in terms of its advocacy among the Black and Minority Ethnic participants, and it is also set out in detail in the Racial Equality Council's business plan. Two districts have already responded to this proposal and have submitted funding bids for it.

This chapter will examine further these recommendations together with some of the other issues that arose frequently in the work with service-providers, which can be summarized under the following themes:

- Low awareness and limited race equality competencies among staff
- Data-dependency in a data-scarce environment
- Lack of understanding of Ethnicity Monitoring principles and failure to capture meaningful data
- Difficulties with outreach and consultation
- Consultee exposure and fatigue
- **Low awareness and limited race equality competencies among staff**

Some notes from the research:

One voluntary sector manager described how the organisation did not proactively recruit Black and Minority Ethnic volunteers for fear that they would experience racism on placement with other organisations.

An advice worker reported that staff were fearful of handing out leaflets about race equality issues to Black and Minority Ethnic people for fear of offending them by treating them differently.

An agency worker described reluctance to provide translated information

because of the risk of raising expectations that the service would also be available multi-lingually.

An agency representative reported that a valued Black and Minority Ethnic member of an agency advisory panel left after being described by a colleague as a ‘nigger among the woodpile’.

Two groups of trainers found that, even when training was offered for free, audiences such as play workers and clergy expressed limited interest in taking up the opportunity.

A local authority worker described how the organisation needed help to know how to deal with a group of residents who had made it clear that ‘they don’t have and don’t want any Black people living there’.

A number of staff described having attended training events outside the area, in which they were chastised for their ignorance and made to feel responsible for racism in the Southwest. The participants were acutely aware of their lack of knowledge about how to progress race equality and culturally-aware services but described how the training experiences had made them frightened to admit it for fear of recrimination. *‘People need a safe environment in which to ask questions and learn in order to make a difference.’*

Senior staff in one organisation expressed real concern that their lack of personal exposure to race equality issues rendered them unable to take responsibility for implementing their Duties under the Amended Race Relations Act.

Senior staff in another organisation described how in addition to race equality guidance materials and handbooks, frontline staff needed training to alert them to the need for the use of such materials *‘staff don’t know what it is that they need to know’*.

One health worker reported asking her Trust if there was any form of anti-discrimination policy governing staff and patient relations. She was told *‘no policy existed because there was no problem here’*.

The picture emerging from work with service-providers was that, whilst a few staff had both race equality skills and experience, most had had little experience of race equality practice in their work. For the majority, this stemmed from a number of factors:

- ◆ Organisations' lack of systematic planning of activities that staff could follow
- ◆ Poor communication to staff about the organisation's commitment to race equality and what was expected of staff members
- ◆ Lack of training related to staff's specific roles on how they could play a part in their organisation's responsibilities to promote race equality
- ◆ Lack of good quality, rurally relevant and empowering training
- ◆ Limited levels of interest among colleagues about race equality, having a 'slowing down' effect on team effort and interest, even where some individuals were motivated
- ◆ Lack of staff exposure personally or in the work setting to the real consequences of race inequality for Black and Minority Ethnic people
- ◆ Lack of ability to imagine and 'think into' what the impact of race inequality is, or how organisational processes can bring inequality about
- ◆ Inability to take frequent advice on the issues because of lack of competent specialist workers within organisations, and because of the limited funding capacity of specialist agencies such as the Racial Equality Council to respond to the high levels of demand throughout the county.

Most of these factors would be overcome by key measures including:

- ➔ **Good quality, role specific, rurally relevant training.** Such training needs to be enabling and go beyond consciousness/ awareness raising, and therefore involves more time than a day. Moreover, in situations where staff have had no exposure to the issues the first stages of sensitisation will take considerable time before job-focussed training issues can be addressed. To optimise the use of expenditure, training could be delivered distinctly but simultaneously across all the equality themes (race, ability, sexuality, gender, age) whilst pitching training sessions at specific role types (customer care, staff management, work relationships, service planning and evaluation etc). Training curricula can also be tailored to the differing levels of legal detail needed by the various grades of staff. The degree of training needs to be proportionate to the potential a staff member has in his/her role to exert powers over Black and Minority Ethnic staff/ service users. This power analysis should be done in respect of his/her organisational seniority and management functions or in respect of his/her role in facilitating a person's access to the service. Training must enable staff to work out the practical things they can do in relation to their roles if it is

to be effective. All training must also be accompanied by facilitative changes in the way that organisations operate, to enable staff to implement the things that they are learning to do. The impact of training should be monitored by thorough appraisal systems, which should also enable staff to flag up where the organisational environment is making it difficult for them to use their learning.

→ **Strong leadership and clear organisational commitment.** Public bodies must now comply with the Race Relations Amendment Act (2000), and produce Race Equality Schemes of work setting out how they are taking account of their race equality duties, in every part of their work. Organisational commitment is not communicated corporately through the simple existence of a Race Equality Scheme itself, but in the messages that senior staff communicate about the importance of implementing the Schemes of work and measuring their impact. Senior staff themselves need competent understandings of race equality, if their messages are to enlist the confidence of staff in their leadership on the issue. The translation of leadership commitment into corporate commitment is only achieved by enabling all staff to be clear about what practical activities they are being expected to undertake as individuals. In the research, we found that most staff did not know what their organisation's race equality policies were or how to implement them. Moreover, staff were very sceptical about their senior and executive managers' commitment to race equality, and assumed that all that was expected was to vaguely satisfy some of the Inspectorates' tick boxes on the matter. It was generally perceived that attention to race equality would require extra resources and that within organisations' grand scheme of priorities resources would not be justified. In fact the perception among many staff that their organisation paid only lip-service to race equality was expressed by staff in a manner that was precipitately indicative of a loss of faith in their employer's driving values. This creates an argument that leadership and commitment to equality and quality in service delivery is an important factor in maintaining staff morale. The argument follows the line that staff take organisational tokenism as a signal that by extension their work is of token value. Institutional tokenism undermines individuals' vocational attitudes to their roles, thereby diminishing job satisfaction and damaging morale. The Local Government organisation DIALOG will be publishing its own arguments for the prioritisation of race equality,

making the legal, business and other cases for this, particularly in rural areas. This guidance will be available in autumn 2003 from DIALOG@lg-employers.gov.uk where the cd of the report entitled *Race is Relevant* can be ordered at a price of £30. Other research describing *Action on equality and diversity in local government* and presenting the arguments for such action can be found at www.local.odpm.gov.uk/research/crosscut/crosscut.htm. Ultimately, the law places a Duty on Public Bodies to promote race equality, and only those in positions of power in organisations can enable their staff to fulfil this obligation, by commissioning training and developing a culture in which commitment to making services accessible to the hardest-to-reach is seen as the best indicator of the level of quality and commitment applied to the service-delivery ethos.

- **Use of appraisal systems to support staff and monitor progress in relation to race equality.** Another means of transmitting information to staff about Race Equality Schemes is through appraisal systems, allowing staff and their managers to work out role-specific responses to their organisation's race equality schemes, and enabling managers to identify staff who particularly need training. This requires, however, that training is prioritised for staff who conduct appraisals, to make sure that they themselves are able to help staff to identify positive action they can take and to assess weaknesses in understanding or performance.
- **Availability of specialist advice and advocacy staff.** In the course of the research we were directed to many people who had been given responsibility for race equality issues in their organisations, often within a wider 'diversity' brief. Most of these staff whom we encountered were diffident about this designation, and felt ill-prepared. Typically the role was appointed to an existing member of staff who was given the task of checking out what the organisation had to do in terms of government expectations in one form or another. Whilst several of these staff approached this task with vigour and saw it as an issue of quality service, others were not proactive, and most certainly did not see themselves as a point of reference or expertise on the issue for other staff to access. By contrast, what service-providing staff canvassed in this research wanted was a point of reference to whom they could bring issues and incidents for competent and sensitive resolution, and someone to whom they could turn for expertise in dealing with specific client cases and with planning in general.

Many staff felt that case-by-case advice was likely to be the most effective way of helping them address race equality and build their competency to do so. Most service-providers did not have that facility available to staff. In the absence of this facility, many organisations were turning to their Black and Minority Ethnic staff to act as race equality experts, which these staff often felt placed an unwelcome spotlight upon them. Many felt uneasy about being singled out to comment on the organisation's plans when their own experience of prejudice in the organisation had not been addressed. Moreover, most Black and Minority Ethnic staff felt that, whilst they could contribute to their organisations' race equality initiatives by making suggestions and providing feedback, their own ethnic identity did not qualify them to speak as representatives or specialists on behalf of the whole, diverse, Black and Minority Ethnic population. (☛ *I don't like standing out here and that people think I am a race expert...People don't realise that Minority Ethnic people are not homogeneous.*) Hence, for these reasons outlined above, access to specialist advice is a key issue for organisations. There are a number of means by which to address it:

- Access to specialist, local, race equality community development workers (such as proposed by the Racial Equality Council).
- Multi-agency access to trained and supported Community Contributors, who would bring forward learning from Multi-Ethnic networks (such as proposed by the Racial Equality Council), and also their own expertise or experience of specific issues (e.g. health, housing)
- Consultancy services from the Racial Equality Council on specific areas of policy or practice development (either on a fee-by-case basis or as part of a Service Level Agreement).
- Complainant Aid services from the Racial Equality Council as part of multi-agency case support. However, service providers need to sign-post staff who are often unaware of referral services to this facility.
- Appointment of specialist staff to act as race equality advisors and champions. This could be done either by recruiting staff with specialist skills in cross-cultural communication and service provision and with counselling and mediation skills, or by training an existing member of staff with a strong aptitude for this work. Staff in this position, however, need to have influence at a senior level in the organisation to bring about

change and build the confidence of staff in their efficacy, but they also need to be seen as sufficiently detached from the influences of internal organisational politics to gain staff trust. Conceivably, such specialist staff could also be shared among local or neighbouring organisations, provided that they could make themselves sufficiently accessible and known to staff.

- Staff also suggested that they would value ‘buddy schemes’ in which they could have a link with a staff member in another organisation with greater experience of race equality issues and multi-ethnic working. It was also suggested that these schemes would allow for exchange periods during which staff gained experience of working in a multi-ethnic setting. This idea was especially popular among health staff. The idea has many benefits in that it allows for a kind of on the job training during exchange and through telephone access to their buddy. However, the idea does not necessarily provide for rural dimensions of race equality to be covered.

- **Data-dependency in a data-scarce environment**

Another key factor preventing race equality action in organisations was the assumption that nothing can be done without quantitative and geographic data about the location and density of Black and Minority Ethnic people and the perception that that data is not available. This assumption that data must come before action appeared to stem from several sources:

- the belief, still widely held by many people, that the minority ethnic population in Devon is so small as to be negligible and that only numeric data will prove otherwise
- the tendency to argue that unless ‘sufficient’ numbers of people are proven to exist as a significant proportion of the population action cannot be justified. (The CRE code of practice on the Race Relations Amendment Act (2000) nullifies this argument: *"Due regard does not mean that race equality is less important when the ethnic minority population is small".*)
- the belief that somehow demographic data will supply service providers with all the information they need to plan services, or that it will help them find Black and Minority Ethnic communities. (Most service providers need qualitative information to address their consultation duties under the Race Relations Amendment Act (2000) and, as chapters 3 and 5 describe, it is rare to find geographically clustered co-ethnic communities.)

- the tendency to look to quantitative data for help, when no community leaders can be identified to help agencies access qualitative data.
- The typical reliance among agencies upon sample questionnaire and tick box surveys, which inevitably fail within a random sample to elicit more than a handful of responses from Black and Minority Ethnic people, making the statistical value of this information minimal.

One Local Authority representative epitomized this data-dependency with the remark that they would not take action on race equality until the Racial Equality Council had told them where the Black and Minority Ethnic people in their district were.

For some purposes demographic data is a real need, for example in setting benchmarks for monitoring the number of people accessing services. This benchmarking and monitoring can be invaluable in flagging up where there is inequality of opportunity. Many people pointed out, however, that Census data is the only source of demographic data available to them but that it goes out of date rapidly. Given that the rural Black and Minority Ethnic population has increased on average by over 100% over 10 years this is a valid concern. There was also considerable lack of faith in the 1991 Census in relation to ethnicity data, because people believed that the collection of data from the Minority Ethnic population had not been thoroughly pursued or supported. For example, information from the Devon & Cornwall Chinese Association indicated that the number of Chinese people in the county was far higher than the Census suggested. The 2001 Census has used new data collection and analysis methods, which it hopes has addressed those issues. More information can be found on these methods by looking at the Office for National Statistics web site and referring to information about the 'One Number Census'.

Whilst the 2001 Census remains an important source of information, and provides a greater depth of accessible data this time round because of advances in information technology, the issue of the need for constantly up-to-date data is important. Data specialists suggested during the course of this research that the only way to get better information, would be via collection of ethnicity information through the data collected when a person registers with a GP (doctor). Almost everyone registers with a GP within a year of moving to an area. Travellers are the main exception to this rule, and this issue is being addressed in Devon through the multi-agency Health Forum. Patient information is already used widely for all kinds of government statistical planning and demographic analysis, and is processed in such a way that patient confidentiality is not compromised. One of the

fields of data not yet collected at GP registration however is ethnicity. If it were, this data could help to produce regular data on Minority Ethnic demography, along with all the other demographic analysis that GP data currently provides. This research proposed early on that this issue should be addressed, and referred the issue to the Health Authority and to the County Council with a specific paper on this matter. It is an issue that has attracted interest elsewhere in the UK and has been the subject of some Department of Health pilot projects.

- **Lack of understanding of Ethnicity Monitoring principles and failure to capture meaningful data.**

The research found that data is also scarce in Devon, because agencies are struggling to capture data about the ethnicity of their own service-users and staff. On the whole, service-provider participants described a very poor picture of the way that agencies approach Ethnicity Record Keeping and Monitoring (ERKM).

Fundamentally, even though many staff knew that somewhere along the line ERKM was expected of their organisations, very few had a clear idea about the rationale for ERKM or how it could benefit them as service - providers, or their service-users. We also found that the lack of understanding among service-providers about why they should be doing ERKM communicated itself to service users who felt very suspicious of agencies' intentions in collecting the data, and worried about how it would be used. This in turn fed back to the service-providers, either anecdotally or because of the low numbers of people filling in ERKM questions, who became yet more worried about asking ethnicity questions which they could not justify themselves.

We even heard from sources in an Agency who described an argument within the service about the value of ethnicity monitoring. According to the sources the prevalent view was that everyone should have same access to services and that therefore special service monitoring for certain groups was unnecessary. We also heard from service-provider staff who reported that their organisations did do ERKM but that they didn't know the results. Some service provider staff felt that their organisations were doing ERKM just so they could tick Inspectorates' boxes to say they had.

Apart from the lack of understanding of the principles of ERKM, staff also described mechanistic problems which lead to poor data availability. The

first weakness in ERKM systems was the point at which data is collected. Mangers described how staff simply forgot to ask clients about ethnicity, and others described how staff were too embarrassed to ask for fear of causing offence. For a few participants, the whole idea of ERKM was too confused in their minds with the notion of racial segregation to feel comfortable with it. Some participants reported problems further down the ERKM process, in that different ethnicity classification systems were being used within single organisations. The underlying reasons for this included attempts by staff to devise systems that would collect more detailed information than the broad census classifications, and therefore be more meaningful practically, and the obligation to use different government departments' systems. We also heard of instances in which the paper-based classification systems used to collect data were not the same as the computer based classification systems that were used to process the data. The consequence was that ERKM data could not be collated within organisations, and that similar problems existed with merging or comparing data between organisations. Furthermore, we also heard that sharing of ethnicity data between agencies was noted especially as a rural problem because it was perceived that, in rural areas with small Black and Minority Ethnic populations, agencies have had less experience of race equality and of data protection work. Senior staff also described a lack of understanding among colleagues of the way ethnicity information can be used under the Data Protection and Crime and Disorder Acts, and noted that agencies erred on the side of caution because of this lack of awareness.

There are good reasons to collect ethnicity data, among them

- ◆ The need to assess whether members of the Black and Minority Ethnic population might be experiencing discrimination in the way services are made accessible to them or delivered to them
- ◆ The need to be able to communicate with people who have specific interests or needs about opportunities or to seek their advice

To be convinced of these reasons and to understand them in the context of the particular services they offer, service providers need good training about ERKM. Staff need to be clear about the purposes of ERKM, how to design collection and analysis systems, how to process and use the data, and how to feed back the benefits to Black and Minority Ethnic clients/staff. Staff who are responsible for managing ERKM systems and frontline staff who administer it need to be able to clearly advocate its benefits, in order to gain the confidence of Black and Minority Ethnic people in the process. In chapter 4 we have also proposed that confidence in the process is improved – for those supplying and using the data – by

using a classification system that facilitates prescribed classification and self-description simultaneously. Such a system is laid out below:

Please select and tick heading below and describe your ethnic identity as you wish, alongside it:		
	✓	Your own description:
White		British
		Irish
		Other white
Mixed		White and Black Caribbean
		White and Black African
		White and Asian
		Other mixed
Asian or Asian British		Indian
		Pakistani
		Bangladeshi
		Other Asian
Black or Black British		Caribbean
		African
		Other Black
Chinese		Chinese
Other		Other ethnic group

This system provides data that can either be accessed in detailed or aggregated form, depending on the appropriate user purpose. It also enables respondents to describe themselves in a way that they feel comfortable with. The research has also found that increased ERKM response rates are likely if ERKM forms contain a clear description of the way in which the data will be used, who will see it in its original form, and the benefits of monitoring ethnicity. Done better, ERKM processes could provide an immensely improved quantitative demographic resource both within agencies and across agencies.

- **Difficulties with outreach and consultation, and addressing consultee exposure and fatigue**

Most organisations, however, described a need for good qualitative data as the basis on which to address race equality issues effectively. Whilst ERKM is a good way of flagging up potential areas of discrimination (and is therefore the basis for many of the Specific Duties on public bodies under the Race Relations Amendment Act (2000)), active dialogue with

Black and Minority Ethnic staff and clients is needed to investigate the causes of problems and to identify the most effective ways of solving them.

Most good practice guidance on outreach and consultation is usually based on the premise that qualitative data should be sought from Black and Minority Ethnic and Faith organisations in the locality of concern. The assumption is that these organisations exist, formally network with a considerable membership, and can either speak for that membership on the basis of internal data gathering processes or can facilitate consultation with members. As described in chapters 3 and 5, in rural parts of Devon, there is almost no formal networking of Black and Minority Ethnic people. What exists tends to be informal, remains out of the reach or knowledge of the majority of Black and Minority Ethnic rural dwellers, and is not geared at addressing welfare and social inclusion issues. Similar limitations for faith groups are also described in chapter 9. Even the regional and centrally based Minority Ethnic / Race Equality groups and services that do exist are not immune to this problem. In chapter 2 we set out how this research tackled the problem, and demonstrated that without the creation of a Black and Minority Ethnic rural infrastructure there is no easy way of addressing the difficulties of rural outreach.

The presents a real problem for service providers and also adds to the ‘invisibility’ of the Black and Minority Ethnic population. As a consequence, most service providers had no specific inclusion measures in place aimed at Black and Minority Ethnic people, and others relied heavily on one or two known Black and Minority Ethnic staff and contacts as consultation references. Staff and such consultees alike were unhappy about the levels of exposure and expectation overload placed on individuals, with one staff member commenting that in their experience, due to the amount of agency demand at any one time:

20 agencies could be descending on just 1 Black person

During the course of the research, an analysis of this problem, as felt by service-providers, was constructed together with a solution framework to address the issues. This analysis is set out in the web-based appendix to this chapter (www.DevonREC.org), in the section entitled ‘*Effective engagement – a rural strategy for Black and Minority Ethnic inclusion and support*’. The technique used in constructing this analysis is known as Objective Oriented Planning and has the benefit that, in constructing the problem analysis, it also examines impact and the benefit that the solution construction also provides a description of the knock-on benefits of resolving the problem.

The outcome of the analysis of the problem of outreach for service providers was that the following measures are needed to support rural service providers in meeting their outreach and consultation duties:

- ➔ Better demographic information as a basis for planning and focussing consultation, ideally provided through GP registration data processing (as described above).
- ➔ Better data-sharing between agencies, facilitated by data management specialists with an understanding of the legal framework in relation to the promotion of race equality and elimination of racism.
- ➔ Community development outreach workers, with race equality specialist skills, to establish and facilitate Multi-Ethnic networks bringing together Black and Minority Ethnic rural people and enabling them to set the consultation agenda via the networks.

This latter recommendation is perhaps the most important measure that service providers could take to support their staff with outreach and consultation, and to address the concerns of the Black and Minority Ethnic population. These networks would serve a number of purposes, including the opportunity for people to meet and raise issues of concern in a relaxed setting. By having these networks, the members would be able to collate the issues of concern, discuss them and put them forward to the relevant service providers. In this way Black and Minority Ethnic people would have specific and creative opportunities to inform the development of services in their communities, and to raise issues in a way which feels 'safe' and 'positive' amongst other network activities. This form of networking and opinion gathering would cut out the need for numerous, agency-led and snapshot consultation exercises. Moreover, this research has demonstrated that outreach to people in rural areas requires multiple lines of outreach, extensive effort applied to 'snowballing' contacts, and a great deal of time and face to face work with individuals, because of the lack of rural Black and Minority Ethnic 'representative' groups. Many rural service providers approached the project wondering if we had found the magic ingredient that would succeed in helping their various consultation exercises reach a significant number of Black and Minority Ethnic people within their sample. However, the project experience indicates that quick snapshot exercises in the current rural situation are unlikely to reach Black and Minority Ethnic people because of the lack of infrastructure or groups through which to reach people. The only magic or panacea-like ingredient then is this missing ingredient of a rural Minority Ethnic infrastructure. To address this problem by creating and facilitating rural networks will take resources, but has benefits that would more than

compensate for the current frustrations agencies face in meeting their specific duties, and it is an outlay that can be shared with great cost-efficiency between service-providers. The Racial Equality Council's business plan sets out the costs of facilitating such networks with community development support. The Racial Equality Council also has fully worked up project proposals and person specifications, which have been the basis of bids with two Districts and with the Children's Fund to draw down government and voluntary sector funding for rural networks. Other agencies interested in partnership working to establish rural networks in this way are also invited to contact the Racial Equality Council.

The primary benefits of such networks for the Black and Minority Ethnic members are discussed further in chapter 12. However, there are also multiple spin-off benefits for agencies. For example, evidence collected during this research indicates that paper-based consultation exercises are unlikely to generate responses from key sections of the Black and Minority Ethnic population for reasons including time pressure, cultural differences in interest in written media, language and literacy. The ability to conduct orally-based and language-sensitive consultation through networks would enable agencies to change their consultation culture and overcome communication issues and the difficulties of knowing how many languages in which to provide written information in mail-shots (over 50 languages are spoken by pupils in Devon Schools). Unions could also be helped to make their services accessible to a wider membership, providing individuals with another layer of support. There are also the benefits for agencies described earlier in this chapter of having specialists on hand to provide advice and to make referrals to specialist support. Networks also provide the opportunity for distribution of information, for example through a network newsletter. Such media could help employers to meet their workforce proportionality targets by attracting the interest of potential Black and Minority Ethnic applicants. Networks also provide the means by which skills among the Black and Minority Ethnic membership can be used to support race equality initiatives: For example, the establishment of a volunteer/professional interpreters' pool, or the creation of a community contributors' service, in which people with specialist interests and skills can be recruited to provide advice.

Even with the existence of facilitated community development networks agencies still need to think carefully about the way they plan the use of consultation with the Black and Minority Ethnic population and the participation of community contributors into their structures. Consultation is not an end in itself. To be meaningful, it must ultimately lead to

participant influence and improved relationships between service and user, or employer and employee.

The web-based appendix to this chapter (www.DevonREC.org) contains a section about increasing the participation and influence of Black and Minority Ethnic individuals. It provides further details about what both participation and influence can mean, and the points in the service-provider/user relationship when user participation in shaping services can be sought. The web-based appendix (www.DevonREC.org) then provides a tool for thinking through the design of participation-influence (consultation) process in your organisation.

- **Impact Assessment**

The ability to consult with Black and Minority Ethnic service-users and public is a pre-requisite of the Specific Duty upon public bodies to assess the impact that their services are having upon Black and Minority Ethnic people. Given the difficulties described in this chapter with outreach and data collection, Impact Assessment is a daunting challenge for most service-providers. The proposal in this research, that access to consultation information could experience an accelerated paradigm shift into gear through Multi-Ethnic rural networks, would be an unprecedented help to agencies in working out how to improve the impact of service provision to Black and Minority Ethnic people.

The web-based appendix to this chapter (www.DevonREC.org) also provides some help with a method for assessing the impact of policies and practices that govern the way that service-providers work. This method has been piloted with one District Council, but there is no official, recommended method, so whilst models such as the method provided in the appendix are not yet widely tested, they do at least provide a starting point for agencies to experiment with and develop.

The Impact Assessment method proposed in the web-based appendix (www.DevonREC.org) ties in with the participation-influence model in the Appendix, which we have called the participation pyramid. The participation pyramid describes the stages that need to be gone through in order to feed consultation data into an organisation, and take that information through a process of dissemination and development so that it ultimately leads to changes and improvements in service delivery. There are 5 steps in this participation-influence process. The Impact Assessment

method can be used at Step 3 of the process, in which consultation information and other monitoring data is used to decide which services need improvement and how, and what new opportunities there are for promoting race equality. The Impact Assessment method also provides the means for identifying and designing monitoring systems that will improve the flow of information about service delivery and flag-up problems. The method basically consists of a matrix of questions, which can be adapted by service-providers, to suit the type of service that is being assessed. The method also makes suggestions about who should lead this process. Information about the legal background of Impact Assessment is also included in the web-based appendix (www.DevonREC.org).

Information about Impact Assessment will also be available from Autumn 2003 from DIALOG in the form of the report *Race is Relevant* and can be ordered from DIALOG@lg-employers.gov.uk.

A final note about improving feedback from staff and clients:

Direct feedback from staff and clients as issues arise is a good means of picking up consultation information as issues arise. However, success in getting feedback depends on people feeling that their views will be handled well. In the web-based Appendix to this chapter (www.DevonREC.org), a method called the Quick Evaluator is set out - a means for staff and managers to encourage clients and employees respectively to feedback information about their experience as service users and employees. In the course of the research a participant also suggested a simple listening framework, to help service-provider staff to improve the way they handle feedback and complaint and to derive benefit from the information. The framework is set out below, and could be the basis for a card which staff can keep as an aide memoir:

<u>Addressing inequality</u>	
✓	
<input type="checkbox"/> Welcome	the fact that a problem has been identified.
<input type="checkbox"/> Listen	carefully to what has been experienced.
<input type="checkbox"/> Empathise	with the way the problem is being felt.
<input type="checkbox"/> Explore	the detail and the facts of the problem sensitively.
<input type="checkbox"/> Plan	a mutually agreed course of action.
<input type="checkbox"/> Feed	the issue into your Equality Steering Group for action.
<input type="checkbox"/> Report	back to the complainant on progress.
<input type="checkbox"/> Check	that the issue has been resolved.

Appendicies

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

The Appendix to this Chapter is web-based and includes:

- ✂. Increasing the participation and influence of Black and Minority Ethnic individuals – designing consultation into your planning and impact assessment process
- ✂. Impact Assessment – a method
- ✂. The Quick Evaluator technique
- Effective Engagement – a rural strategy for Black and Minority Ethnic inclusion and support
- ✂. Objective Oriented Planning – a technique used in the research for developing recommendations with workshop participants.