

Race Equality Framework for Scotland Community Ambassadors Programme - Findings Summary November 2015

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The Race Equality Framework for Scotland (2016-2030)

The Scottish Government is developing a Race Equality Framework for Scotland (2016-2030) to tackle racism and promote equality. The Scottish Government is leading on this work with input from key stakeholders, and with independent support from the Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights (CRER).

Substantial work is being carried out to gather evidence and engage stakeholders and communities across Scotland. This paper relates specifically to the results of the Community Ambassadors Programme; reports on other engagement mechanisms and evidence papers can be downloaded from the [CRER website](#).

The evidence gathering process concentrated on four key themes, which run throughout the development of the framework. These four themes are:

- Community cohesion and safety;
- Participation and representation;
- Education, employment and income; and,
- Health, wellbeing, family and home.

Evidence around these themes has been gathered from a variety of sources including:

- **Reference Planning Groups:** Reference Planning Groups were convened to assist in the planning and delivery of four Strategic Action Forums. Individuals were appointed to these groups based on their knowledge and expertise of race equality theory, policy and practice.
- **Desk based research:** CRER gathered a range of quantitative and qualitative evidence, producing four interim evidence papers ahead of the Strategic Action Forums. These papers provided an initial overview of the evidence that exists, and noted critical gaps in evidence. Evidence was also contributed by members of the Reference Planning Groups. These interim papers were edited and finalised as new evidence emerged through the engagement process.
- **Strategic Action Forums:** The Scottish Government and CRER arranged a series of workshops with practitioners, policy makers and other stakeholders to identify priorities and solutions in line with the four themes previously listed.
- **Community Ambassadors Programme:** This programme involved community organisations directly in the development of the Framework, with nominated community ambassadors engaging directly community members through a structured Community Discussion process, feeding back the results to CRER and the Scottish Government.

The Community Ambassadors Programme

The Community Ambassadors Programme (CAP) was developed by CRER in partnership with the Scottish Community Development Centre as an innovative community engagement mechanism to conduct community consultation and to provide a direct link for members of minority ethnic communities to the framework.

Through CAP, minority ethnic grassroots organisations and groups nominated Community Ambassadors who received training and support to deliver structured focus groups with community members. The focus groups used a bespoke workbook to gather information about issues facing Scotland's minority ethnic communities, identifying needs, priorities and solutions regarding race equality in Scotland. The workbook reflected the four themes listed earlier, breaking these down further into sections titled: Work and Money, Education, Making Our Voices Heard, Health and Homes, and Community Safety and Belonging.

The information written in the workbooks by the Community Ambassadors was recorded into an evidence database, alongside other pieces of evidence gathered, and this provided an initial basis to develop the Frameworks' content.

This report summarises the themes, needs, concerns, priorities and solutions raised by community members through the Community Ambassadors Programme and in no way reflects the policy position of Scottish Government.

Overview

In total, 62 Community Ambassadors undertook the initial training, with 42 completing a Community Discussion and returning their workbook. These Community Ambassadors engaged with 347 members of minority ethnic communities to ensure their voices were heard in the policy development process. The Community Ambassadors also provided their own input during their training, bring the total number of community members involved through CAP to 389.

Community Ambassadors completing the programme represented 33 organisations (some organisations nominated more than one community ambassador to represent different projects). These organisations are listed in the appendix.

Participants were from a wide range of backgrounds, including several African communities, Lithuanian, Chinese, Syrian, Algerian, Indian, Pakistani, Polish, Thai, and Slovakian Roma communities. Additionally, several intersectional groups participated, including minority ethnic women, Muslim and Sikh women, young people, older people, carers, and people with disabilities.

Introduction

This document offers a summary of the views and experiences put forward by minority ethnic communities through the Community Ambassadors Programme. The views expressed in this summary are the views of participants, rather than the views of the community organisations who nominated Ambassadors, CRER or the Scottish Government.

Occasionally views put forward seemed to not reflect the structures or policies in place, suggesting that these areas are not well understood and may require better communication from the public sector to communities.

Suggestions were also put forward which addressed reserved matters beyond the competency of the Scottish Government, and which pertained to the UK Government or to other bodies and agencies. Where appropriate, these opinions will be fed to the relevant bodies and organisations.

Additionally, groups at times made suggestions which were contradictory; this is noted in the write-up. This is not surprising, however, considering that the views of minority ethnic communities are not homogenous.

This summary also attempts to distinguish between issues concerning race equality in Scotland, and wider issues which may relate more specifically to groups such as recent migrants, to asylum seekers and refugees, and religious groups.

Groups were able to choose which sections of the workbook to discuss and respond to. Of the 42 workbook responses received, 37 responded to "Work and Money," 35 to "Education," 32 to "Making Our Voices Heard," 32 to "Health and Homes," 30 to "Community Safety and Belonging," and 12 to "Other."

Executive Summary

Overarching issues

Some of the issues raised by participants recurred throughout the themes being covered in the Community Ambassadors Programme workbook:

- Ensuring that the differing experiences of recent migrants and established minority ethnic communities are reflected in policy and data collection
- Improving levels of disaggregation of data by ethnicity
- Ensuring that communities are involved on an ongoing basis as the Framework is implemented

Work and money

Several groups wanted to see fair and equal opportunities in work and action to tackle institutional racism and discrimination. Equal access to quality jobs and career progression for minority ethnic people, including leadership positions in all sectors and equality for minority ethnic women in the labour market, were particular priorities. Suggestions to address these issues included:

- Better enforcement of the Equality Act 2010
- Tackling pay discrimination and occupational segregation for minority ethnic workers (in both occupation and seniority / career progression)
- Equality and diversity / anti-racism training for Scottish companies and organisations
- Positive action schemes (some also supported legalising positive discrimination)
- Tackling nepotism in the workplace
- Tailored employability activities e.g. work shadowing, training, support for under-employed people
- More access to apprenticeship positions, including for older adults
- Better recognition of overseas professional and educational qualifications

Discrimination and barriers in the recruitment process were of particular interest to participants, with potential solutions including:

- Representation of minority ethnic people within shortlisting and interview processes
- Anonymous applications
- Quotas and targets
- Improved monitoring and enforcement practices
- Tighter controls on application bias, including through ending word of mouth and other closed recruitment practices
- More support for minority ethnic applicants

In terms of enterprise and business ownership, participants wanted to see:

- More financial support for small business owners and self-employed minority ethnic people
- Specialist support for minority ethnic business owners and potential business owners

It was noted that minority ethnic people are often self-employed not entirely through choice, but as a result of barriers and discrimination in the labour market.

In relation to broader issues around income, participants wanted to see action to tackle poverty, address debt, and ensure that the welfare system supports working people and their families.

Groups raised issues particular to recent migrants, including:

- Impact of negative public opinion on opportunities for recent migrants, e.g. media stereotypes
- Education and advice for migrants on employment opportunities and rights
- The need to raise employers' awareness about migrants' rights to work

Participants also wanted to see the right to work given to all asylum seekers.

Education

Groups raised several key changes that they would like to see in the Scottish education system:

- Better action to ensure parents and pupils have their voices heard
- Equality education in all schools, built in through the Curriculum for Excellence and addressing issues of racial inequality, minority ethnic culture and history
- More opportunities for modern language classes which reflect non-European minority languages
- More opportunity for minority ethnic children to obtain places at high-performing schools
- More individualised, holistic support and guidance for minority ethnic pupils and their families
- Targeted help for those with additional support needs
- Addressing eligibility issues for school meals and grants which affect some categories of migrants
- Race equality training for staff
- Programmes for minority ethnic groups to offer additional support where needed
- More representation of minority ethnic people in the teaching workforce, including at senior levels
- More financial support for further and higher education

Perceptions about racial inequality in the school system were raised by many participants, with the following potential solutions:

- Addressing institutional racism in the school system
- Action to ensure minority ethnic children do not feel segregated or discriminated against
- Tackling stereotyping of minority ethnic groups in education and the curriculum
- Educating pupils and teachers about cultures, race and racism
- More support for pupils and students facing racism, including schemes to encourage reporting of racist incidents
- Recognising and dealing with the links between racial inequality and poverty which can affect pupils
- Ensuring that recent migrant and asylum seeking families understand the education system

Groups also felt that more action was needed to support post-educational transitions:

- Improvements in careers advice and support at school for minority ethnic pupils, with a wider variety of options and post-school destinations discussed (for example apprenticeships)
- Engaging with parents as well as pupils on career paths and post-school destinations

- Better work experience opportunities for school pupils and young people through work shadowing, placement programmes and internships, and an increase in vocational learning (monitoring take up of all of these for potential inequality or discrimination)
- For transitions from higher and further education to work, tackling the common problem where minority ethnic graduates are employed in low quality jobs despite being highly qualified

In terms of adult education, English as an Additional Language provision was a significant concern, with many groups desiring better access to free classes that are flexible in time and place, family-friendly and provided at an appropriate level (e.g. advanced ESOL for professionals).

Making our voices heard

Many groups felt that more representation and full participation from minority ethnic groups was needed in all local and national democratic structures to ensure the voices of these groups are heard. Potential solutions included:

- Positive action to remove barriers to participation
- The introduction of quotas or targets
- Enforcement of equal opportunity in recruitment / selection on to representative structures
- More recruitment, training and mentoring for potential minority ethnic candidates by political parties
- Awareness raising to encourage engagement with politics and activism, and more use of political shadowing schemes and other capacity building programmes

Groups also believed the ability of minority ethnic groups to contribute to society also needed to be better acknowledged and valued, with negative stereotypes challenged. The formation of a national minority ethnic representative body to engage with communities was suggested.

Participants wanted to see better practice community engagement by public bodies, suggesting that:

- Minority ethnic groups should be better consulted and engaged in decisions that affect their lives
- Engagement should be with a variety of minority ethnic groups rather than one community, and should involve a broad range of people including young people
- Consultations should be more genuine, bespoke, inclusive, informative, and accessible, without using political jargon
- Post-engagement activities need to be improved, including feedback, taking action on results
- Support should be provided to empower communities to organise themselves

Health and homes

Participants raised a number of key changes they wished to see in the health and social care sector:

- More culturally sensitive services, where practitioners are aware of different needs, experiences and viewpoints (including culturally significant gender issues, practices which could be harmful to health and issues of stigma) across all health and social care services including mental health
- Involving communities in service planning
- Increasing diversity among health service workers
- Improving accessibility of services, including language interpretation and translation
- Awareness raising about services and health issues, and preventative work with communities
- Better specialism and research among health practitioners about rare diseases and other health issues that are more prevalent in minority ethnic groups to help narrow health inequalities
- Ensuring that recent migrants, including asylum seekers, can access services which meet their needs (for example providing an induction process into the healthcare services, consideration of health norms in recent migrants' home countries, access to healthcare for those without leave to remain, specific mental health issues, support for those suffering domestic abuse without recourse to public funds and the NHS surcharge applicable to migrants)

In regard to housing issues, participants wanted to see the following improvements:

- Monitoring of all social housing applications to identify whether current methods of housing allocation are ensuring equality or not
- Better provision of information about housing services for minority ethnic groups
- Tackling overcrowding where this is causing problems for minority ethnic families (without preventing those who want to from staying together in homes that could be seen as overcrowded)
- An increase in social housing availability, especially larger style housing which can accommodate those who wish to live in extended family groups for cultural reasons
- Better housing conditions and property maintenance in social housing
- Some participants felt that minority ethnic people were disproportionately offered housing in deprived areas, or within specific areas with a concentration of minority ethnic residents, and that these practice should be stopped
- More Government control and enforcement with regard to the private rental sector, including how properties are advertised, offered for rent and maintained
- Increasing availability of affordable homes to rent and buy
- More housing support, advice and schemes to support home ownership
- Improving provision and awareness of services for minority ethnic people at risk of, or experiencing, homelessness
- Tackling barriers for recent migrants, especially around landlords' perceptions of whether they are legally allowed to reside in Scotland and associated discrimination and around destitution for asylum seekers who have been refused leave to remain.

Community safety and belonging

Participants were particularly concerned with structural and personal racism and discrimination. Potential solutions included:

- Enforcing anti-racism policies and procedures at work and in other areas
- Keeping racism on the political agenda, and ensuring public bodies tackle discrimination and racism
- Awareness raising campaigns about racism in Scotland
- Tackling negative stereotyping within the media
- Addressing intolerant attitudes in the white majority ethnic community

Several groups addressed community cohesion and integration, with many wanting to see:

- More integration focussed community activities and community learning, e.g. cultural awareness programmes and events
- Funding for effective community cohesion projects, which should be monitored and evaluated
- Work that involves both minority ethnic and white communities, is led by local people and engages people on a local, grassroots level
- Community centres run by minority ethnic groups and funded by the government

Participants were concerned about community safety, and believed that groups would not feel safe until they felt equal. Participants felt that the following action is needed:

- Ending social isolation for minority ethnic groups
- Tackling anti-social behaviour and street harassment, including through preventative work
- More visible community policing, improved CCTV, and more community liaison officers

Many groups highlighted concerns around policing and criminal justice, with improvements suggested including:

- Increasing representation of minority ethnic people within Police Scotland, with changes in Police Scotland's organisational culture, recruitment practices, retention rates, promotion practices and accountability to address this
- Police Scotland working more with minority ethnic groups to improve connections and cultural awareness
- Ensuring that minority ethnic groups receive equality in their treatment by police
- Investigating racist incidents more pro-actively and transparently and ensuring that racial aggravation charges are made where appropriate
- Ensuring that hate crime is appropriately prosecuted, with harsher punishment than currently applied
- More action to encourage reporting of racism and hate crime, with recognition that poor relationships between police and communities are resulting in under-reporting
- Establishing an external, independent agency to oversee Police Scotland (similar to PIRC) with minority ethnic representation

Community Ambassadors Programme Findings

Work and money

Thirty-seven of the community groups which participated in the Community Ambassadors Programme responded to the section addressing work and money. Major areas of concern about work and money were racism in employment, reducing employment rate inequalities, employability and capacity building, job creation, recruitment, job quality, in work issues, enterprise, issues affecting recent migrants, issues affecting asylum seekers and refugees, and income and benefits.

Employability and capacity building

Groups wanted to see an increase in work experience opportunities for minority ethnic people, including:

- Work shadowing
- Volunteering opportunities with expenses available to cover costs
- Vocational training schemes

Participants felt these should be funded by the government, and open to all minority ethnic groups. Some felt that these opportunities, which are often open only to young people, should be open to older adults as well to help them return to or enter the workforce.

In terms of employability services, participants wanted to see:

- Community projects to support under-represented minority ethnic groups into the workplace, with application and interview guidance
- Programmes tailored specifically to minority ethnic groups, which are adequately resourced and monitored for impact and ideally run by minority ethnic groups (e.g. minority ethnic community employment hubs)
- Services which have an understanding of cultural and religious issues; and,
- Proactive schemes for minority ethnic young people to get involved in the workforce
- Accountability within mainstream employability services to ensure their work is effective for minority ethnic clients
- Participants also stated that the family environment of minority ethnic groups needs to be influenced, and that efforts should also be made to increase the confidence of minority ethnic groups when applying for jobs.

Several groups were unhappy with their experience of accessing Jobcentre services. They felt that:

- Jobcentres should not pressurise people to find work when suitable jobs are simply not there
- Efforts should be made to ensure minority ethnic groups are placed into jobs that match their level of qualification, as minority ethnic people are often highly qualified in comparison to the work they can access
- Jobcentre workers should be given equality and diversity training

Some groups stated that barriers, including the language barrier, must be broken, and there should be:

- More support for those seeking employment or training who are struggling with English language
- English as a Second or Other Language provision connected to workplaces
- Interpretation services which can be accessed through employability schemes
- Volunteering opportunities to help people to build their English language skills

It was also noted that geographical issues can be a barrier to employability, for example minority ethnic people may face additional barriers in seeking employment outside the Central Belt and particularly in rural areas.

Childcare issues were also seen as a significant barrier. Many groups wanted to see more childcare support, and improved childcare offered to working families that is affordable or free. Participants felt that childcare should be flexible, as many minority ethnic groups work unsociable hours. It was noted some families choose not to have a parent work due to the cost of childcare. Some participants felt there should be more hours at nursery for children, nurseries within businesses, and less expensive nursery places. Respondents also suggested that childcare should be subsidized for all, not just low-income families.

“Bring BME people to the forefront of changing institutional structure and racism. Have more support networks and mentorship services for minority ethnic communities to develop careers and a career scheme just for the BME community.”

Reducing employment rate inequalities

Many groups wanted to see:

- People from minority ethnic groups having equal opportunities to get quality jobs
- Minority ethnic people in high-ranking positions and leadership roles in the private, public, and third sectors
- An increase in the visibility of minority ethnic women in employment

Participants felt was important to have employment rate equality, but particularly equality throughout grades and levels of seniority, rather than just an overall increase. Groups also spoke about occupational segregation, and only being able to obtain employment in some sectors, such as cleaning and food service. It was perceived that minority ethnic people are often only being recruited to fill jobs that majority ethnic workers do not want. Respondents felt it was important to see minority ethnic groups in all industries; creative industries were mentioned in particular.

Groups thought this could be achieved by:

- Engaging with employers to build more positive approaches to minority ethnic employees
- Having in-work anti-racism training
- Creating a training scheme for minority ethnic migrants with specialist qualifications to enable them to compete for jobs in Scottish industries
- Employing equalities officers to monitor recruitment and treatment of minority ethnic groups

Participants also wanted to see:

- Highly regulated working practices

- Conditions that safeguard employment for minority ethnic groups
- Positive action schemes
- Developing a strategy for minority ethnic employability in quality / senior jobs through targeted advertising and recruitment
- More access to support networks, career development schemes and mentoring programmes
- Action to increase opportunities in areas where minority ethnic people are under-represented (Modern Apprenticeships were mentioned by several groups)

Some participants also noted the need to identify changes in organisational culture, and take action to tackle discrimination and tokenism within organisations. It was suggested that:

- There should be a yearly independent review of these issues,
- Equality and diversity training should be made compulsory for human resources managers
- There should be a thorough race equality audit of the public sector

Recruitment

Several groups believed it was very important to tackle discrimination in and barriers to recruitment and suggested:

- Representation from minority ethnic groups at the shortlisting and interview stage (including on interview panels),
- Anonymous applications in respect of all protected characteristics,
- The introduction of quotas or targets for minority ethnic representation within workforces in both the public and private sectors (it was suggested that government should set quotas or targets for representation in public sector employment in line with census data, and monitor progress for all ethnic groups)
- Better equality monitoring at all stages of the recruitment process
- Review of recruitment and interview processes to ensure they are merit based, standardised and transparent
- Enforcement of equality law to ensure employers do not discriminate based on ethnicity
- More support and guidance for minority ethnic groups on recruitment processes and how they work
- Positive action schemes, for example fast-track systems within the civil service
- Open recruitment practices, and an end to closed recruitment (for example through word of mouth) which was felt to enable nepotism and reduce equality
- Some participants also wished to see positive discrimination legalised

“Equality needs to be monitored at interview stage. People should also be given the opportunity to show their skills and experience... before they are judged.”

Apprenticeships

Many groups wanted to see more apprenticeship opportunities made available. It was noted that Modern Apprentices should be promoted as an equitable alternative to higher education. Groups stated that:

- It is important that apprenticeships are meaningful and that the paid employment they offer is sustainable
- Moving from education to apprenticeships to more advanced positions should be easier
- More employers should take part in these schemes

Some groups of participants seemed not to be aware that Modern Apprenticeships are paid positions; or perhaps confused the Modern Apprenticeship system with other types of vocational training.

Groups also suggested that advanced Modern Apprenticeships to help those from minority ethnic groups into the workforce or into higher quality jobs should be considered. Participants felt that appropriate apprenticeship opportunities could also be a good option for minority ethnic young people who lack educational qualifications, combining on-the-job training and education, and wished to see more opportunities of this nature.

Participants believed that apprenticeship opportunities should be closely monitored for discrimination at all stages – application, admittance, progression and sustainability of employment after the apprenticeship period is over.

In-work issues

Participants wanted to see equality within the workplace for minority ethnic workers. Particular priorities raised included:

- Equal treatment in the workplace, including equal pay for minority ethnic workers
- Action to tackle institutional racism
- Action to tackle discrimination, prejudice and stereotypes in the workplace
- Support for career progression to ensure minority ethnic groups are represented at all levels, including minority ethnic women (some participants suggested that public bodies who fail to improve this should be sanctioned)
- Access to in-work training and continuing professional development
- Quality of employment, particularly tackling low pay, poor working conditions and long hours

Participants thought this could be accomplished by:

- Improved use of the public sector equality duties
- Enforcing the Equality Act 2010
- Ensuring there is no pay discrimination and encouraging employers to pay the living wage
- Encouraging minority ethnic groups to take action using legislation
- Equality and anti-racism training within organisations
- Improved channels for minority ethnic people to make official complaints about discrimination
- Enforcement of equal opportunities policies within organisations

- Better support from Trade Unions to help minority ethnic people access their rights at work (it was perceived that support is often weak, especially in challenging racism at work).

“Employers should have a scoring system for further training that promotes equality for all. The staff that go on training each year should be from diverse backgrounds.”

Some participants felt that agency workers are particularly at risk from poor treatment in the workplace and negative attitudes from employers, and felt that more regulation from the government was needed to stop discrimination and abuse of agency workers.

Racism in the workplace was also a significant concern, and examples were given of times when participants had experienced direct racism in the workplace. Groups recommended that the government work with the police to monitor hate crimes at work, and that institutions deal with complaints of racism within the workplace more effectively, impartially and objectively.

Some groups felt the application of workplace policies and practices could be racist at times. It was felt that white Scottish people were given extra advantages and leniency in comparison to minority ethnic workers. It was felt that people sometimes broke the rules in employment, for example by calling in sick unnecessarily), and employers would tolerate this behaviour from white Scottish staff but not from minority ethnic staff. Opportunities in the workplace, such as taking extended leave or retiring early, were seen as benefits that were only accessed by white Scottish people. Participants also felt that minority ethnic people are put under extra pressure at work and expected to work harder than white Scottish colleagues.

Some participants also raised concerns about employment rights more generally. They wanted to see:

- Greater sanctions (e.g. fines) for employers who do not pay the minimum wage or who employ those without the right to work; reporting violations should also be easier
- An end to zero-hours contracts
- Better maternity and paternity leave
- A lower retirement age, especially for those who would benefit most from this
- Better sick pay entitlements and more recovery time for workers suffering ill-health, who are often forced to return to work too early

Data and monitoring

Groups wanted to see publication of data that shows a clearer picture of minority ethnic groups in employment, including minority ethnic groups in senior positions. Some participants felt that where data showed potential discrimination and / or under-representation of minority ethnic groups, there should be a requirement to take positive action measures to correct this.

Volunteering and work

Some participants wanted the government to put a limit on the number of hours a person can volunteer at an organisation without being offered a job, as there were concerns about exploitation. They highlighted instances where despite volunteering for long periods of time, minority ethnic volunteers are overlooked for paid employment opportunities which are instead offered to other candidates.

Enterprise and business

Some of the groups taking part felt that minority ethnic groups should be empowered to create more jobs for themselves. Several groups wanted to see:

- Specialist support services to provide training, guidance, and support to minority ethnic groups on how to run and grow a business, including support for existing small business owners
- A reduction in “red tape” for small business
- More accessible information about grants and funding for self-employment
- Seed funding for small businesses
- Easier processes to hire overseas employees

However, it was also noted that many minority ethnic people are self-employed because they are not able to gain good quality employment due to discrimination and barriers within the labour market.

Income and finance

Participants wanted help for those on low incomes to pay for essential things, and an end to financial restrictions as a barrier to their goals in life.

Specific concerns were raised about financial and banking systems, which were felt to create a cycle of poverty. Participants suggested that:

- Banks should be more flexible
- People should be able to access more offers and help from banks in regard to loans and mortgages
- Credit scores should not be affected by inability to deposit money in accounts
- Loans should have lower interest rates
- Irresponsible lending should be tackled by improving financial education and addressing issues with payday lending (this applies especially for people with poor English language skills who may not understand the terms and conditions)

Groups also wanted to see more research conducted regarding the relationship between poverty and ethnicity to inform policy development.

Support, benefits and welfare

Groups felt that the welfare system should support working people and their families, and that this ethos should be promoted widely and applied to all people. It was thought that consideration should be given to families (including those in the middle classes) who want to work but have run into financial difficulties; support schemes should be put into place for these groups. Participants felt it should pay to work, and that people should never choose not to work because of benefits.

Participants felt that more resources should be made available in areas of social deprivation to break the cycle of poverty. With regard to foodbanks, some participants felt that these should be changed into hubs that engage users actively, with users volunteering there in order to 'give back'.

Work and money issues affecting recent migrants (including asylum seekers and refugees)

Several issues were raised that pertained more directly to recent migrants, rather than to race equality issues that affect all communities.

Many participants felt that attitudes towards migrants are a major barrier within the labour market and workplace. They wanted to see a change in how the public and employers view recent migrants, with recognition for the hard work and contribution of migrants to the economy and an end to negative stereotypes of migrants as benefit scroungers who abuse the system. It was felt that employers actively discriminate against migrants. One group noted that they had been told "There is no work for Slovaks," and that they have difficulties in obtaining work as a result of discrimination. A range of practical barriers were also raised.

"Scotland needs to start open discussion about positive impact of immigration into this country. Migrants are constantly seen as a threat to society, but this is not true."

Potential solutions to these problems included:

- A government campaign to promote the positive impact of immigration and encourage the media to highlight positive stories
- Anti-racism training in the workplace
- Education for migrants about employment rights, organisational practices and Scottish working life
- Employability support tailored to meet migrants' needs
- English language classes in the workplace to address language barriers
- Awareness raising for employers about migrants' right to work
- More action to attract and retain overseas workers
- Ensuring recruitment processes have objective criteria which do not ask for more experience, skills or abilities than required by the job (in particular where these can be hard for migrants to fulfil, e.g. particular levels of English fluency which are asked for, but may not be strictly needed)

Migrant workers noted that they are often threatened with their jobs by employers if they report discrimination or rights abuses.

Many groups raised issues around overseas qualifications, skills and experience. Participants felt that employers should be encourage to see cultural differences and overseas qualifications as positive attributes. Suggestions for improvement included:

- Easier translation of foreign qualifications to ensure people are employed at an appropriate level for their experience
- Guidance for employers to know which qualifications are equivalent to established UK and Scottish qualification
- Recognition of overseas qualifications, with improvements in the activities of NAIRC and SQA to support this
- 'Top up' programmes to ensure recent migrants can add to their existing skills and qualifications instead of having to start again

As well as the issues above which would affect a range of recent migrants including refugees and asylum seekers, specific issues were raised for these groups. Some participants felt that asylum seekers should be able to work through the asylum process, and that the government should better support refugees to find jobs. However, another group pointed out that Jobcentres should not pressure refugees recently granted status to work, since sorting out personal circumstances such as childcare during the transition process can be a barrier and this causes great stress.

Education

Thirty-five community groups which participated in the consultation responded to the section addressing education. Major areas of concern about education were the Scottish education system, the curriculum, equal opportunities, school support and guidance, school engagement, the impact of poverty, capacity building and professional development for teachers, staff diversity, education affordability, aspirations, the university admission process, post-education transitions, careers advice, work experience and vocational opportunities, support in college and university, issues concerning recent migrants, and issues concerning refugees and asylum seekers.

The school system

Several groups believed changes needed to be made to the education system in Scotland, and that parents and pupils need to have their voices heard about needed revisions.

Participants felt it should be easier to obtain placements at exclusive and high-performing schools, and that it was difficult to obtain a place at a Roman Catholic school. It was suggested that:

- Schools should be monitored to ensure pupils have equal opportunities to enrol and that minority ethnic pupils do not face discrimination, and,
- Pupils should be able to join schools without having a religious obligation.

Participants also noted that grouping classes according to ability is fair, as long as divisions are not influenced by racial bias; it was felt that this should be monitored to ensure minority ethnic pupils do not face discrimination. Respondents felt this should be provided to all, regardless of ability and race or religion.

Other suggestions included an end to exam-based assessment and smaller class sizes.

Curriculum

Many groups were concerned about anti-racism and racial equality education in schools. It was suggested that anti-racism education be built into the Curriculum for Excellence, and that diverse cultural and religious education be given to all students.

“Model of education needs to change – particularly how history is delivered. It must embrace everyone who lives within the nation.”

Suggestions made included:

- Ensuring that equality and diversity awareness is embedded in the curriculum, from pre-school throughout compulsory education
- Ensuring racial equality does not become ‘lost’ in general discussions about equality
- Inclusion of minority ethnic history within the curriculum, particularly education about Scotland’s role in the Transatlantic Slave Trade, as many children do not learn about this

Groups also wanted to see changes to language education in the curriculum. Recommendations included:

- More non-European modern languages in the curriculum for primary and secondary school,
- Opportunities for bilingual and multilingual children to study their native language in schools with guidance from bilingual support teachers

Participants also wanted to see more life skills taught in secondary school, with education on money management, cooking, and home maintenance and repair. It was perceived that soft skills are important, as they build student's capacity, so education should be holistic to help pupils acquire a variety of knowledge.

Respondents also wanted to ensure students received citizenship education and that the creative arts were valued as a way to build transferable skills.

Equal opportunities in the pupil experience

Many groups stated that minority ethnic pupils must receive the same opportunities and attention as majority ethnic pupils. Participants wanted to see institutional racism in schools addressed.

Groups felt that:

- Minority ethnic children should not be (or feel) segregated from their peers
- Minority ethnic children should be able to participate in a wide range of activities and opportunities, including drama, trips, and sport without facing barriers; this includes extracurricular activities
- Schools should not discriminate against minority ethnic pupils in grading, and anonymous grading should be considered
- Minority ethnic pupils can feel isolated and discriminated against, and this needs to be addressed
- Practical and financial support to under-achieving minority ethnic pupils experiencing poverty, as there is an interaction between poverty and racial inequality (examples could include free extra tuition outside of schools)

Participants noted the risk of stereotyping minority ethnic groups, as this limits people's ability to progress. Some groups stated that there is a perception that certain minority ethnic groups do not achieve highly, and that pupils may not be encouraged and supported in schools due to this.

Experiencing racism at school was a concern for some groups. Participants felt there should be stronger mechanisms to encourage reporting racist incidents in schools which reassure minority ethnic pupils, who may feel reluctant to report due to fear of retribution or victimisation. It was felt that targeted support and mentoring could assist with this.

One group noted that minority ethnic children can feel pressure to "act the goat" to fit in better among other pupils, as some majority ethnic children can bully or ostracise those who are seen to be hard workers. Participants felt this should be addressed to allow minority ethnic children to integrate without compromising their education.

School support and guidance

Several groups wanted to see more individualised and personal support for minority ethnic pupils and young people. Suggestions to improve support included:

- More involvement from guidance teachers, pastoral carers, and after-school workers to creatively and individually mentor pupils, provide positive role models, and combat negative stereotypes
- Targeted help for those with additional support needs, and the involvement of families in this
- Fostering the aspirations of minority ethnic pupils, and holding them to high standards in school
- Programmes directed towards minority ethnic and migrant groups to offer additional support
- More holistic guidance and counselling support for minority ethnic pupils and families
- Support and encouragement to stop pupils from dropping out because they feel left out or discriminated against
- Training for staff to support minority ethnic pupils
- Better representation of minority ethnic staff within the teaching workforce

Some groups believed there was a need to identify and address reasons for under-achieving with minority ethnic pupils, and that specialised education programmes should be developed to help pupils from under-performing minority ethnic groups (this suggests there is a perception that minority ethnic groups do not achieve as highly as they do). Some participants felt the exclusion of minority ethnic pupils from schools should also be addressed, with approaches adopted that involve working with the young person.

School engagement

Several groups wanted to see better school engagement with minority ethnic parents to support pupils' learning and personal development. Participants recommended:

- Better connections between schools and families, and having families more involved in the education system from early years onwards
- Helping families understand the education system and are aware of opportunities to be involved
- Homework clubs to encourage participation in the learning process
- Holding awareness sessions for families and students
- Active recruitment campaigns to encourage more minority ethnic parents to join parent councils

It was perceived that children whose parents are involved in school boards (or otherwise engaged in the running of the school) receive more opportunities and attention; participants felt that minority ethnic parents may face additional discrimination because of their relative lack of social capital in the school community. Some participants felt that extra effort should be made to engage families who are new to Scotland, to ensure they understand the education system and can be involved. It was suggested that workshops could be held in communities to foster this.

Participants wanted to continue and roll out the practice of having community link workers between schools and minority ethnic groups to help with the engagement process and felt funding should be allocated for this.

Capacity building and professional development for teachers

Several groups believed that teachers should receive anti-racism training, as they felt that institutions ignore the racism present in schools. Participants felt that there should be diversity workshops and racial equality training, and continued self-reflection by teachers. Others stated that teachers must know more about different cultures, so they can best help their students and engage with other cultures and minority ethnic groups.

Diverse staff

Several groups wanted to see more diverse staff (teachers, head teachers, principals, front line education workers, education department heads) in education establishments, who are knowledgeable about issues and barriers affecting minority ethnic groups. Participants felt that bilingual teachers are needed, as are minority ethnic teachers who can be role models for minority ethnic pupils. It was noted that recruitment, promotion, and professional development strategies should be altered to help with this, and that equality and diversity must be taken seriously.

Careers advice and transition

Groups wanted to see better careers advice at school, beginning at an early stage, focusing on giving broad advice and improving the chances of employment for minority ethnic students. Participants felt that:

- There is too much pressure to attend university, and that alternate paths should be encouraged (including Modern Apprenticeships)
- Better links between career guidance and subject choices should be considered
- Parents should be involved in the career choices for school leavers, with information about career options beyond conventional routes to better help their children
- Systems to grow the aspirations of minority ethnic pupils throughout school should be improved, encouraging subject choices in line with their interests and career aspirations
- Financial support (i.e. scholarships and grants) should be offered to school pupils to encourage advancement in sport and creative arts

Problems of low aspiration amongst minority ethnic school leavers should be addressed, including for those who do well in terms of qualifications

Work experience and vocational opportunities

Many groups wanted to see better work experience opportunities for school pupils, with placements at companies and charities during school time and the summer. Participants suggested:

- Work shadowing opportunities which involve minority ethnic staff
- Placement programmes specially aimed at minority ethnic pupils
- Additional skills learning programmes
- Recognised work experience certificate administered through schools
- Monitoring the uptake of work experience by ethnicity

- Allowing access to further work experience opportunities for pupils who have left school in fourth year

“Provide summer work placements for experience in specific fields... opportunities where minority ethnic staff are directly involved in delivering work experience and... vocational learning on behalf of their company.”

Groups also wanted to see more vocational learning opportunities available within school. Participants felt that employers should visit schools and hold employment workshops, and that employers should also be encouraged by the government to give equal opportunities to all pupils in accessing work experience.

Further and Higher education

Several participants felt that additional support is needed to help minority ethnic students adjust to transitions from school to further and higher education. Improving confidence and aspirations on transitioning from further and higher education to work were also raised as a priority.

“Minorities are having and gaining degrees, but have no confidence due to cultural barriers. This limits social mobility.”

Affordability of FE and HE

Participants agreed that access to a full-time education should be available to all groups, regardless of income and immigration status. Many felt that this should be free and that more financial support is needed. They felt that there is a common misconception that minority ethnic parents will financially support older children / young adults, but this is often impossible, making financial issues a serious barrier.

Participants reported that students from minority ethnic groups can find tuition fees very difficult to pay, and recommended that financial support such as extra scholarships, free tuition, grants and additional loans and bursaries should be considered, particularly for minority ethnic students from disadvantaged backgrounds. This included funding for post graduate education.

It was also noted that the price of student accommodation should also be examined, as it can be a barrier for those who need to stay away from home but cannot afford to.

University admissions

Participants felt that minority ethnic young people were discriminated against in the university admissions process, with a perception that white pupils with lower qualifications are being admitted over better qualified minority ethnic pupils. It was thought to be easier for white pupils to access higher education than minority ethnic pupils. There was also a perception that waiting times for admissions at colleges and universities should be evaluated, to ensure equality for all applicants.

Support and transitions to work

Participants felt there should be extra support for students with language or cultural barriers at college or university. In terms of support to transition to work, some participants wanted more internships to be made available in order to give students a better chance of getting a job in the industry they have qualified to work in. Similar comments were made in relate to graduate traineeships.

International students

Some specific issues were raised regarding international students. Some participants felt that the current fees structure for international students is unfair; it was suggested by some that education should be free for this group as well as for domestic students.

Participants felt that tuition structures should be equal for all, and that international students should also be able to work more hours so they can afford their education.

It was also noted that international students must return to their home countries after they complete their studies, and that the government should consider action to keep these students here.

Support in college and university

Participants believed college lecturers should support students who are behind in their studies, or who are having trouble socialising and participating. They suggested that extra classes could be introduced to help students catch up. It was also suggested that colleges and universities should hire more minority ethnic lecturers to provide specialised support for minority ethnic students. Participants felt that holistic support is important, especially for overseas students.

Education issues affecting recent migrants (including asylum seekers and refugees)

Participants noted that recent migrant families need more information about the education system to ensure they are aware of all opportunities available. They suggested that classes should be offered to migrant families about the Scottish education system to raise awareness and understanding.

Some participants felt that children and families who have recently migrated or are seeking asylum may not be able to cope well with the stress this causes, and that support from schools should be offered.

Some participants stated that teachers may need additional support in managing classes with many recent migrant minority ethnic pupils of the same group, as they may not socialise with other students and may only want to speak their native language in class.

It was also noted that issues around eligibility are preventing some migrant children from accessing school meals and grants like others; it was felt they should not have to struggle due to their immigration status.

English as a Second or Other Language (ESOL) provision for adults was also a significant concern, with many groups stating that there should be better access to free classes for those who need them. It was suggested that:

- Classes could be run by universities, who could train volunteers to teach
- Classes should be promoted within minority ethnic groups and organisations
- Classes should be made more flexible and family friendly, with classes held at the weekends or evenings, and with a crèche on site for workers and learners with childcare needs
- Classes should be offered in a variety of places, not just city centres
- Employers with a high number of migrant employees should offer classes in the workplace
- Digital technology should be used in ESOL, and digital literacy could be taught as an add-on
- Fraudulent practices in ESOL exam centres should be examined

Groups also believed that migrant children should receive extra ESOL support in school if needed upon enrolment. However, participants noted that children born in Scotland should not be automatically assumed to be English speakers as migrant parents may not have been able to teach them; teachers should find out if English is used in the home to assess their education need.

Several participants stated that advanced and conversational ESOL are particularly needed, as these matter greatly to participation and employment but most courses are too basic to cover this. Groups felt it was also important to consider specialised ESOL for recent migrant and refugee professionals, e.g. sponsoring International English Language Testing System courses for refugee doctors (an essential qualification for registration with the General Medical Council).

Groups also stressed that asylum seekers should be able to study full-time, and should have access to college and university education (the comments on this issue suggest that although participants were aware of barriers to this, rights in this area are not widely understood). Some participants believed that help with college and university applications for those who are not fluent in English should also be offered.

Participants wanted more opportunities generally for migrants to access adult education. They were particularly interested in providing more access to learning about civic law and community life in Scotland.

Making our voices heard

Thirty-two community groups which participated in the Community Ambassadors Programme responded to this section. Major areas of concern were participation and representation in decision making, political representation, media, capacity for participation and engagement, community engagement, volunteering, language needs, belonging and issues concerning recent migrants.

Decision Making

Many groups believed that more representation of minority ethnic groups and full participation from minority ethnic groups was needed in local and national democratic structures, and in community and civic life. It was felt that this ensures that the voices of minority ethnic groups are heard and will enable communities to better challenge racism.

Groups wanted to see increased representation and participation in:

- Elected political structures at local, Scottish and UK level
- The civil service
- Public appointments
- Management boards in public and voluntary sectors
- Community councils
- School, college and university boards
- Parent councils
- Community planning structures

Local involvement was particularly seen as crucial. Participants felt that minority ethnic groups should be encouraged to become involved in the local community and represent the community in decision making. It was noted that the structure of local decision making bodies should represent the population of the local area.

Several groups noted that current approaches to engagement from elected officials rely too much on consultation, when direct participation in decision making structures is what is really needed. It was recommended that positive action take place to increase representation.

Groups noted that action needs to be taken to remove barriers that are stopping minority ethnic groups from participation in decision making structures. Several groups also recommended that quotas or targets be introduced in political structures and public bodies to ensure fair representation. Participants stressed that equal opportunity in recruitment is key to this. Groups raised concerns about recruitment practices and the public sector workforce profile; these were detailed in the Work and Money section.

Groups believed that the ability of minority ethnic groups to contribute to society needed to be better acknowledged, respected and valued. Participants wanted negative stereotypes to be challenged, and anti-racism training introduced to public boards and committees. The need for minority ethnic role models was highlighted, as this would give aspirations to minority ethnic groups and challenge negative perceptions.

Some groups stated that minority community leaders should have a role at community and national levels to ensure the voices of communities were reflected. Others, in contrast, believed that there was an issue with cronyism that that engagement needed to go beyond the “usual suspects” and gatekeepers.

It was also noted that there is a difference in the experience of minority ethnic people who have been long term residents or born in Scotland and that of recent migrants, and that relying solely on ethnicity statistics did not make the different levels of engagement of these two distinct groups clear.

Participants also noted that members of minority ethnic groups who become popular public figures can be gentrified and “almost like white,” and fail to represent the community.

One suggestion for improvement was that a national minority ethnic representative body could be formed. It was thought that this body could engage with minority ethnic groups and feedback views to the Scottish Government directly, and ensure voices of minority ethnic groups are heard.

Political representation

Many groups called for more minority ethnic representation in politics to better reflect the diversity of the electorate. It was believed that local and national political structures should set an example of fair and proportionate representation for the rest of Scotland. The Scottish Parliament, UK Parliament and Local Authorities were all mentioned by groups.

Participants thought political representation could be increased by:

- Political parties recruiting, training, mentoring, supporting and standing minority ethnic candidates in election
- Political parties raising awareness of opportunities through engagement with minority ethnic groups
- Political parties setting targets for minority ethnic membership, and particularly for minority ethnic women
- Investment by the Scottish Government in programmes to encourage political activism and raise awareness of political structures in Scotland, especially for young people

Groups believed that minority ethnic communities are regularly stereotyped in political debates and discussions, and felt that increased participation would help to avoid this by giving communities a strong voice. However, it was mentioned that minority ethnic individuals may hesitate to stand for election or be involved in politics, as the media “stamp down” those who do not fit the traditional profile of a politician.

Some participants suggested funding additional programmes similar to CRER’s political shadowing scheme to encourage and empower more minority ethnic individuals to run for local and national elections.

It was felt that political parties were not always transparent in their reporting of the number of minority ethnic candidates standing, as often a majority of these candidates were from white minority ethnic backgrounds, rather than non-white backgrounds, and therefore face less barriers to engagement.

Capacity for participation and engagement

Several groups felt that there needed to be proactive efforts to raise awareness of opportunities to participate in decision making structures, consultation opportunities and other forms of participation such as volunteering.

It was suggested that:

- Local partnerships, which include representation from minority ethnic groups, should be created to encourage local participation
- Confidence building and training courses should be resourced and promoted
- Opportunities to participate and engage should be better advertised

Some groups also wanted to see:

- More capacity building projects to involve minority ethnic groups in politics, as current opportunities are not meeting needs
- More projects that would train and support communities and groups to actively engage in politics, and provide opportunities to enter the political field
- Opportunities to mentor and network with politicians
- More support from elected officials in mentoring and political shadowing schemes

It was noted that minority ethnic young people in particular should be encouraged to participate in politics, and participate in mock debates and elections in schools to prepare them to engage in democratic structures. It was felt that social media is an important tool for this.

Participants mentioned that those minority ethnic individuals who are struggling economically, working several low paid jobs, may not have the time for political engagement as they are working to make ends meet, but that these groups need to be included as well.

Community engagement

Several groups called for better quality community engagement, and felt that minority ethnic groups should be consulted and engaged in decisions that affect their lives, and should play an important role in making these decisions. Participants wanted to see a more inclusive, informative and accessible approach to engagement that will empower communities.

Several complaints about previous community engagements were mentioned, including:

- Times when the results of engagement with minority ethnic groups did not result in feedback to participants
- Times when actions recommended were not taken forward
- Times when engagement with one ethnic group was thought by public bodies to be sufficiently representative of all minority ethnic groups

Overall, participants felt that minority ethnic groups need to be respected and feel appreciated when they make their views heard, and want to feel included in society. They felt that current approaches to consultation and engagement often fail to reflect this, and that efforts do not always seem to be genuine.

“On one hand, we are not welcomed, on another we are expected to make our voices heard.”

It was recommended that:

- Local politicians should engage more purposefully with minority ethnic groups
- There should be local programmes to offer leaders of minority ethnic groups opportunities to speak to wider community groups and community councils
- Partnership working and the involvement of grassroots organisations should be seen as key, with more support and funding for minority ethnic community organisations to offer volunteering opportunities (as these can facilitate engagement and participation)
- Engagement should be monitored to show impact
- Consultations must not be a patronising “tick box” exercise, but encourage and promote meaningful, genuine, inclusive, sustained involvement and engagement
- Consultations be tailored to the needs of the group, and rigid, inflexible structures should be evaluated and changed
- Local authorities and the government should engage with minority ethnic groups on a regular basis and “not just when they ‘must’.”

Groups felt it was important that engagement is welcoming, and that simple, understandable language is used. Participants stressed that “equality” and “diversity” cannot simply be buzzwords in a community engagement setting; they need to have meaning, and people need to feel confident enough to assert their views and rights.

Participants also wanted to see communities empowered to organise themselves, and that communities be provided with resources and training to better achieve this.

“Experience has shown that BME communities can and will make their voices heard but the process needs to be explained. Every way to gather info needs to be looked at, e.g. not just attending an evening meeting every month... it needs to be tailored to the needs of the group.”

It was also noted by several groups that better engagement with young people was needed, and that approaches to engaging young people were often tokenistic. Participants felt that involvement must be through young people directly, rather than through gatekeepers or intermediary organisations.

Feedback is important to groups, as is sharing the outcomes of consultations. It was recommended that a mechanism to properly consult minority ethnic groups be established; this could be done through community groups. It was also noted that work and family commitments should be respected, and groups

may require access to childcare or a crèche to be able to participate in evening events, and events during the daytime limit engagement opportunities for many workers.

Another noted that it was difficult to understand jargon and political language, and that for those who face language barriers it can be intimidating to sit among fluent English speakers. Some participants suggested that in this case, separate meetings with an interpreter present may help.

Groups felt that local leaders should make a habit of attending community groups' meetings, especially when specifically invited. It was also noted that local authorities, councillors, MSPs, and MPs are not always accessible to communities due to working hours. Participants reported that those who work 9-5 jobs cannot access their representatives face-to-face during these times, and this limits opportunities for direct engagement.

Calls were made to have a hub in the community where minority ethnic groups can make their voices heard, find advice, and be signposted to local organisations for help and support. Participants believed public and voluntary sector organisations should provide information for this hub, and that information in a variety of languages should be available. It was noted that funding should be available for this, and for local voluntary organisations working with minority ethnic groups.

Related to this, there were also calls to stop funding cuts to specialist services, as they meet the needs of those who are often ignored by mainstream services. This was linked to a need for participation and representation which would ensure the specific needs of minority ethnic communities were met.

Several groups expressed that feeling a sense of belonging in Scotland was important to feel comfortable and confident enough to participate in public life. It was noted that young people and older people in particular may need additional support to engage fully.

Representation of minority ethnic groups in the media

Several groups were concerned about the role of the media in representing minority ethnic groups, and believed that the media should provide positive representations that reflect the reality of minority ethnic groups, rather than promoting negative propaganda. It was also thought that the media should show respect when reporting on issues from abroad, as ethnic groups and countries can be stereotyped and only receive negative coverage.

Groups recommended that regulations should be reviewed to limit the negative portrayals of minority ethnic groups and enforce use of neutral language. Participants felt that there needs to be an open, improved relationship with the media, and to aid this, the media should engage with minority ethnic groups and listen to their stories, rather than making assumptions.

Some participants also felt there needed to be more representation of minority ethnic groups within print and broadcast media, especially in public-facing roles such as journalists and presenters, to ensure a diversity of voices and perspectives which could help combat negative coverage.

Participation and representation issues affecting recent migrants (including asylum seekers and refugees)

Some participants suggested the development of a minority ethnic information centre (similar to the previously mentioned 'hubs' for wider minority ethnic communities) to provide information to recent migrants in their mother tongue about political structures and opportunities, to ensure that they are also able to participate. They felt this could also provide information about work, education, community integration, and life in Scotland.

It was noted several times that there is a need for bilingual workers, or interpreters, within political groups and the public sector, especially when organisations are consulting with minority ethnic groups. Some participants suggested that interpreters can help minority ethnic groups to access services and support, and help them feel included and involved. It was recommended that bilingual workers be hired in public-facing roles within the public sector to break communication barriers.

Health and Homes

Thirty-two community groups which participated in the consultation responded to the section addressing health and housing. Major areas of concern were health and social care provision, public health awareness and education, mental health, health and wellbeing activities, housing services provision, social housing, private renting, housing conditions, housing associations, diverse communities, homelessness, issues affecting recent migrants and issues affecting refugees and asylum seekers.

Health and social care provision

Many groups believed culturally sensitive health services were needed to ensure practitioners were aware of different needs, experiences, and viewpoints. The provision of culturally sensitive information, as well as information in different languages, was seen as an important aspect of this. As well as in general health and social care, cultural sensitivity was raised as crucial for mental health services in order to reduce stigma and encourage minority ethnic groups to access services.

Participants noted the importance of:

- Involving minority ethnic groups in discussions and in service provision to their communities
- Being aware of culturally significant gender issues (including the offer to be treated by a doctor or nurse of the same sex)
- Ensuring patients understand issues of confidentiality and options available to them
- Increasing diversity among the health service workforce
- Using the knowledge of minority ethnic staff to improve practices
- Increasing the understanding of cultural practices which can be harmful to health and which may be hidden by stigma in the community

Groups believed that outreach work was important – recognising particular needs among minority ethnic groups and address the problem in culturally aware ways. Community engagement programmes were mentioned as a way to address this, as was the role of the education system.

“...Include specific health issues affecting particular minority ethnic communities in health related topics from primary level onwards and education on cultural practices that can be harmful to health.”

Participants also wanted to see an end to discrimination in the provision of services, and ensure that all minority ethnic groups have equal access to healthcare. It was also noted that members of communities were often reluctant to visit their GP, and that the NHS should make an effort to encourage this and help minority ethnic groups overcome barriers to accessing healthcare.

Some participants felt that intermarriage was an issue for some communities, and suggested that the NHS should raise awareness about the potential risks of this so that minority ethnic groups can make informed choices.

Several groups wanted to see more awareness among health practitioners of rare diseases that are more prevalent in specific communities or issues that may affect particular minority ethnic groups to help narrow health inequalities. Recommendations included:

- Tailored, specialised support programmes
- Research on the relevant diseases
- Training for GPs to recognise symptoms of these illnesses to diagnose and treat
- Raising awareness among communities
- Early screening and monitoring of conditions for those at risk

Groups also noted that GPs needed to spend more time examining patients, rather than quickly diagnosing an illness or condition. This is especially important to some groups, as a misdiagnosis could occur if a GP was not familiar with diseases that may affect some ethnicities but not others.

Participants wanted to see health research and treatment trials specific to minority ethnic groups conducted in Scotland. Participants raised the fact that some specific medical treatments have been found to be statistically less effective for some ethnicities, and that this should be studied. Groups felt that communities should not be generalised, and research should be conducted about differing health needs and experiences. This included mental health research.

Groups suggested providing informational leaflets about health services and relevant health issues in health and community centres, and having a weekly drop-in medical service for minority ethnic groups.

Several groups wanted to see improved information about services provided to minority ethnic groups to help them better understand the health service and improve their knowledge of health issues. Participants suggested that printed and digital materials could also help raise awareness about health services, and seminars could take place with community groups.

The stigma present in some minority ethnic groups was mentioned, with groups wanting to see increased awareness that there is no shame in being ill and seeking treatment. Some groups felt that courses should be provided to communities to address this stigma and to encourage people to see their GP if they feel unwell.

Participants also wanted to see fewer problems with drug and alcohol misuse and addiction, with support offered to those dealing with these issues, including support groups in community languages.

Groups also had general concerns with the provision of health services. Issues raised were:

- GPs not providing primary care and treatment readily
- Referrals to specialist services being rarely given
- Health screenings not being provided when requested
- Slow service in accident and emergency
- Not having enough time allocated for appointments
- Few double and on-the-day appointments available
- Unaffordable dental care
- Needing better ante- and post-natal care

There was concern that these issues may affect minority ethnic groups more than the white Scottish community, and that data should be gathered to determine if this is the case.

Participants wanted to see more GPs, and more resources allocated to the NHS to ensure staff were not overworked. Some participants also wanted assurance that the NHS would continue to be free and not privatised.

Public health awareness and education

Groups wanted to see education to improve awareness of health issues, especially those specific to particular minority ethnic groups. Suggestions for this included:

- Information and community programmes provided on health lifestyle (e.g. healthy eating, exercise, not smoking, not misusing alcohol) and cultural practices that could be harmful to health
- Health and wellbeing education being taught to young people in school, including information about mental health, physical health and conditions, healthy eating, and exercise
- A public relations campaign to raise awareness of health lifestyles
- Working with existing health and wellbeing grassroots groups
- Establishing partnership between the NHS and community health services to raise awareness
- Specific awareness raising activities around mental health to raise awareness about services, support and treatment

Some participants also wanted there to be education and awareness programmes about child safety and health for parents and families.

Health and wellbeing activities

Respondents wanted to see an increase in sport participation, and sports programmes that operate within communities and target minority ethnic young people and families. It was believed that culturally appropriate exercise (e.g. female only sports facilities and activities) was important, and should receive council funding to ensure those who cannot afford private membership fees can still participate in sport.

Participants also wanted to see healthy, fresh food more readily available to reduce food poverty and health inequalities in minority ethnic groups. One group suggested incentives for Africans to grow African food; this could be applied to other ethnic groups.

A healthy lifestyle reward scheme was also suggested, which would reward healthy choices.

Social care provision

Participants wanted to see suitable social care provided for adults, with culturally sensitive services and consideration for cultural and religious needs. Some participants suggested that training for social care workers and other staff could help address this. Some felt that more effective signposting and referrals for existing day care centres are also needed.

Housing service provision

Participants felt that more affordable homes are needed in Scotland to rent and buy, and that families should receive more support and advice for this. Groups also suggested a minority ethnic first time buyers scheme, to help minority ethnic groups own houses. They felt that minority ethnic young people who want to live independently of their family should be encouraged to do so, but that those households who wish to live in extended family units should also be supported in this.

Participants believed it was important to ensure equality in access to housing provision for minority ethnic groups. It was stated that minority ethnic groups have a right to live in a proper, decent, affordable house and should be treated fairly. Monitoring of applications and allocations was felt to be important in order to establish that the system does not discriminate.

“Ensure all social housing applications are monitored by ethnicity to identify whether current methods of prioritisation and allocation have any differential impact on minority ethnic applicants.”

Groups suggested a review of housing association policies, as it was believed that some discriminate in the distribution of houses and do not treat minority ethnic residents with respect. Participants felt that housing associations should trust and respect tenants, and be culturally sensitive in policies and housing allocation. Some suggested that placing minority ethnic groups on the boards of housing associations can help ensure policies are fair and do not stereotype minority ethnic groups.

Concern was also raised about the information about housing services given to minority ethnic groups; it was noted that those providing information about services should be unbiased and provide useful information, as a lack of knowledge about relevant services disadvantages minority ethnic groups. Participants suggested that feedback procedures should be put into place to ensure that service users are given equal, useful, and appropriate information.

Groups also wanted to see an increase in availability of social housing. It was noted that:

- The criteria used for social housing assessments should be more flexible and efficient
- Issues that affect minority ethnic groups in particular, such as the desire to live with extended family, should be taken into account in the allocation of houses
- There should be a fair bidding system for social housing that is accessible to all, not just those with access to the internet

Several groups addressed the issue of overcrowding, with some believing the issue needed to be dealt with by local authorities as minority ethnic groups were left with no other housing options, and others believing that families should be able to choose to live in overcrowded houses if they wanted to. Participants suggested that access to larger housing for those who wish to live with extended family members be more readily provided, or that families could be housed in separate houses near each other. The need to have enough rooms to separate children of a different sex or with a distant age gap was also mentioned, as this can be uncomfortable for children.

Housing conditions

Several groups wanted to see stronger measures to ensure all social housing properties are in habitable condition before being allocated to residents, and felt that clean, safe, quality housing should be allocated to minority ethnic groups, and that council housing should be improved, with updated amenities and refurbishment.

It was recommended that:

- Social landlords monitor their houses more stringently to ensure they are in good condition, taking into account issues such as dampness, heating, and ventilation
- The condition of the exterior of properties also be considered
- Allocation should be monitored to ensure minority ethnic groups are not disproportionately being allocated poor quality housing, as it was thought that minority ethnic groups are often given houses in bad condition or in deprived areas with anti-social behaviour problems, low quality schools etc. (this was linked to a fear of ghettoization).

“BME people don’t get nice houses or houses at all, or at the most get houses in bad condition or they have to be far from the areas they have been in; especially the children – this can affect their lives and health.”

Participants also believed that the government should enforce regular checks on property conditions and punish landlords who do not repair and maintain houses, gardens and closes, and if necessary ban them from renting properties to tenants.

Private Renting

Groups also wanted to see more stringent rules about private renting, with more government control over:

- Rental prices, with more rights and flexibility for renters
- Vetting of advertising portals to ensure transparency and equality of renting opportunities
- Tackling unwanted overcrowding and poor living conditions

Homelessness

Groups believed the government should support local councils to house those who are homelessness, and that awareness should be raised about programmes and services for those who are experiencing or are at risk of homelessness. Participants believed there should be easy access to emergency shelters when needed, and the council should provide information about in ways that are accessible for minority ethnic communities. It was noted that when individuals have problems which mean they struggle to maintain residency in their home, they may hesitate to contact the local authority due to language barriers, lack of experience in using the system or fear of discrimination; this may cause them to be homeless.

Health and homes issues affecting recent migrants (including asylum seekers and refugees)

Concerns were raised by refugee and migrant groups around access to healthcare for those without a secure immigration status, as this is a human rights issue. Groups also noted that the NHS surcharge that migrants without indefinite leave to remain must pay is felt to be discriminatory, and is limiting migrants' access to healthcare.

Some groups expressed the need for an induction process to healthcare services in Scotland when migrants first register with a GP, and thought this could cover topics such as NHS 24, organ donation, requesting treatment, accident and emergency etc., and would help to ensure migrants felt aware of health services and comfortable accessing them. It was also seen as important that information be provided in a variety of community languages, detailing healthcare practices in Scotland, along with contact information for GPs and information on requesting interpreters.

Linguistic competence in the healthcare system was a significant concern, with many groups noting the importance of minority ethnic and bilingual staff and translation / interpretation services. This was also raised in terms of enabling migrants to donate blood. Participants felt staff should also be made aware of a patients' right to free translation. It was noted that more time in appointments should be allocated to those who need interpretation services. Some groups favoured face-to-face interpretation or informal translation, while others favoured Language Line, demonstrating that choice is important to patients facing language barriers. It was noted that translators with medical knowledge are more effective at explaining symptoms and treatments. Participants with an interest in mental health wanted to see counsellors and psychologists who speak community languages.

It was also noted that, due to a difference in culture and norms, events such as illness and pregnancy may be treated different in Scotland than in recent migrants' home countries, and that this should be taken into consideration and explained to patients if they are concerned.

Regarding mental health, some participants believed that support for recent migrants could lessen the strain on mental health created by migration and the immigration or asylum process, and have knock on benefits such as preventing addictions. Some participants also noted that the mental health of asylum seekers and refugees requires serious consideration and an action plan.

Groups also noted that victims of domestic abuse without recourse to public funds should be able to access health care, as they are victims not criminals. Participants stressed that these people need medical attention from those who specialise in domestic abuse cases, and should be able to access these services regardless of immigration status. One refugee shared that she was refused treatment in a medical emergency because she did not have a letter from a GP.

Concerning housing, it was also noted that it can be difficult to provide documentation proving immigration status when arriving from overseas, and that this can leave recent migrants vulnerable to slum landlords and unable to find decent housing. It was also suggested that housing applications be made anonymous to stop the "not renting to them" mentality.

Several concerns were raised about housing for refugees and asylum seekers, with groups reporting that they are given substandard houses and that those whose claims have failed or who are transitioning into leave to remain are often destitute and without proper accommodation.

Community safety and belonging

Thirty community groups which participated in the consultation responded to the section addressing community safety and belonging. Major areas of concern were structural racism and discrimination, community cohesion and integration, community safety, policing, racist incidents and hate crime, preventative work, issues concerning recent migrants, and issues concerning refugees and asylum seekers.

Structural racism and discrimination

Several groups were particularly concerned with structural racism, discrimination, institutional racism and stereotyping. Groups believed anti-racism policies and procedures enforced at work were vital.

*“Implement equality and diversity legislation.
Remove structural racism from work and service delivery.”*

Participants expressed a need for racism to be put back on the political agenda, with a multi-ethnic and multi-sectoral campaign to raise awareness of racism in Scotland. Some groups believed Scotland was more racist than England, and noted that minority ethnic children sometimes do not feel a sense of belonging in Scotland due to racism and discrimination.

Groups wanted to see zero-tolerance for racism in the public sector, with organisations tackling discrimination and racism immediately, and acknowledged that this may require a change in policy, as well as better monitoring of racism and discrimination, and evidence of positive change through ongoing equality impact assessments. Minority ethnic groups wanted respect as Scottish residents, and the equal opportunities and rights that white Scottish citizens enjoy.

Community Cohesion and Integration

Several groups addressed community cohesion and integration. Many wanted to see more integration through community activities and community learning, particularly through intercultural awareness programmes and events and funding for effective projects with evaluation to establish what works. It was believed that these events contribute a greater respect and understanding of individuals’ cultures and beliefs and help the white Scottish population see beyond the stereotypes of other cultures. It was seen as key that both minority ethnic and white Scottish groups should take part in these.

Age was thought to be an important factor. It was noted that minority ethnic young people may have a difficult time constructing their cultural identity; multicultural activities and education in school may help with this. The need for older generations to be involved and share their stories was also highlighted.

“British children who are BME do not feel Scottish because they are constantly told they do not belong here.”

Groups wanted to see less intolerance towards minority ethnic communities from those of white Scottish ethnicity, and a greater respect for diversity. It was also important to groups that they were accepted by the majority population. However, it was also noted that older generations may be more resistant to change, and that some minority ethnic groups feel as though they will never be accepted.

Many groups noted that minority ethnic groups need to feel equality and belonging. One group stated that it was difficult to feel safe if they did not feel that they belong. Groups wanted to see mutual respect and dignity for all in Scotland. The role of the media in promoting negative stereotypes was noted by several groups, and the negative impact of racist words and the need to eradicate such extreme language was noted.

Several recommendations for programmes and services run by community groups were suggested, with participants believing these should be funded by the government or local authorities. Some participants felt that minority ethnic individuals have a better understanding of the difficulties communities can face, and would be best placed to provide service and support. Other respondents encouraged all minority ethnic groups and white Scottish communities to work together on community projects and events to promote wellbeing and safety in their local area. The need for local networking and cultural exchange programmes led by local groups and charities was highlighted.

It was noted by some participants that distribution of funding for community groups and services needed to be fair, and needed to be targeted towards efforts that are effective.

Activities to promote community cohesion suggested by participants included:

- Having an advisor visit minority ethnic groups to speak about equality, rights, and life in Scotland;
- Having more minority ethnic representation at Citizens Advice Bureaux to help minority ethnic groups address inequality;
- Highlight the positive aspects of having minority ethnic groups in Scotland in schools, workplaces, and the media; and,
- Highlight good role models to promote positive attitudes and respect for all minority ethnic groups.

Although there was clear support for community cohesion and integration, it was seen as important that different cultures are respected, and that minority ethnic groups be able to maintain their cultural traditions and practices.

“Rather than trying to tartan up and become Scottish, the Scottish community... should be much more respectful to people who work alongside them, rather than trying to turn them into Scots.”

Community safety

Several groups were concerned about community safety. Pubs, streets, cinemas, parks, and remote areas were all seen as areas of concern, as was safety at night. It was believed that an equal community is a safe community, and that minority ethnic groups would not feel safe until they felt equal.

It was thought that social isolation contributes to feeling unsafe. The effect of drink and drugs on anti-social behaviour was also mentioned, with people feeling more unsafe in areas where these were common. Groups wanted to see anti-social behaviour and public drunkenness tackled.

Suggested solutions included:

- More visible community policing and police patrols
- Police presence in community safety projects
- More preventative work
- Improved CCTV
- Cultural awareness training at school and work

The need to tackle clear displays of racism was noted, with one group wanting clearer controls of protests by far right groups to keep them contained and away from high density minority ethnic areas.

It was also suggested that minority ethnic community liaison officers who understand cultural and local issues and can work with communities be employed to address safety, security and racist incidents.

Policing and criminal justice

Many groups highlighted concerns around policing, with several calling for an increase in minority ethnic representation in Police Scotland. Groups noted the need for a change in Police Scotland's organisational culture, recruitment practices, retention rates, promotion practices and accountability to address this. The need for open recruitment was raised (suggesting that participants are not aware of current recruitment opportunities), as was intervention by the Scottish Government to ensure fair representation. It was thought that the police should work with services to make policing more accessible. Groups noted that minority ethnic groups would feel more comfortable working with the police if representation rates were higher.

It was also suggested that Police Scotland work more with minority ethnic groups to improve connections and cultural awareness. The need for outreach work was highlighted, as was the need for police to have cultural awareness training.

It was also stressed that police should not ignore calls from minority ethnic groups, and that minority ethnic groups must receive better treatment from police.

“Police need to listen to us rather than focusing on where we are from. They need to listen and enforce laws against racism.”

The need for an external, independent agency to oversee Police Scotland (similar to PIRC) with minority ethnic representation was stressed by several groups. Participants thought that this body should have minority ethnic groups at the same rank as white Scottish members, and would investigate claims of police not responding to racist incidents appropriately. Groups also stated that this independent body would investigate claims of racism within the police, rather than having accusations of racism addressed by police personnel. It was suggested that the Scottish Government review current practices, and bring in changes to reduce racism and bias.

The need for police to provide feedback to victims of crime and their families was noted, as was the need for cases to be properly supervised, as it was felt that procedures were not always followed and that justice was often not achieved for minority ethnic victims.

There were also calls for the end of stop and search, which was felt to be pursued in a way that discriminates. In relation to this and other perceived areas with a risk of discrimination, it was felt that Police Scotland should be more transparent. It was noted that stop and search is “dehumanising.”

(Stop and search) “...leads to greater stigma and negative feelings which leads to youth feeling as second class citizens. Such approaches lead to lower self-esteem and lack of trust.”

Some groups also felt that punishments for crimes were harsher for minority ethnic perpetrators than for those who are white Scottish; it was felt that action should be taken to ensure that the consequences of crime are equal.

Racist incidents and hate crime

Many groups raised concerns about racist incidents and hate crime. Participants felt that racist incidents were not dealt with as they should be. The need to take criminal reports seriously was mentioned by several groups; communities want racism to be taken seriously.

Communities stressed the need to end street harassment, and noted that this should be taken more seriously by police. Racist violence in cities such as Glasgow and Edinburgh was mentioned, with incidents of stone throwing, egging, car scratching, window smashing and knife crime mentioned.

It was stated that even when incidents were clearly captured by CCTV, they were often dealt with poorly. There was a perception that perpetrators were rarely charged. The need to address this was stressed, with intervention from the Scottish Government suggested.

Participants felt that there needs to be more awareness that racist crimes are illegal and will be punished. Harsher punishments for hate crime were also called for, with information on tough sentences and convictions being publicised as part of a campaign to discourage racism and build community cohesion. Groups believed that racist crimes should receive appropriate sentences, not just community payback orders.

It was noted that racist incidents should be monitored across different agencies and areas, with better collection of statistics on hate crime and racist discrimination. Groups stressed that racist crime is higher than reported and that people do not report due to:

- Lack of trust in the police and faith in the justice system
- Not having enough time
- Not understanding the process
- Being frightened of experiencing more harassment as a result of reporting

It was suggested that there should be easier reporting methods and a dedicated service for reporting and responding to hate crime with dedicated investigation and conclusions. Clear pathways for third party reporting should be promoted to raise awareness, according to respondents. Groups felt that there needs to be clarity and transparency in the process as a whole, and less time should be spent asking victims to repeat their stories. Participants stated that the Scottish Government should use their powers to more effectively tackle hate crime. One group suggested using restorative justice approaches.

Preventative work

The need for preventive work was highlighted, with the need for police, racial equality organisations, communities and public service organisations to work together to end racism. Some groups also wanted to see more efforts to tackle radicalisation in communities to help to ensure the safety of all.

Support for women and families

Participants wanted to see more done to tackle domestic abuse, and to provide safety and help for women who are fleeing domestic abuse from their husbands and extended families.

With regard to child protection, participants were concerned about the named person initiative brought in by the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, and wanted the named person to work with families and to have an understanding of cultural differences. It was suggested that named persons have diversity and cultural awareness and training.

Community cohesion and safety issues affecting recent migrants (including asylum seekers and refugees)

It was suggested by several groups that an informational pack be provided to recent migrants upon entry to Scotland to educate them about their rights, and help them stand up to discrimination.

Groups felt it was important that the majority population understood why refugees and asylum seekers were coming to Scotland - that they are fleeing war and persecution, and are not coming here to access benefits or find better work.

Some participants raised concerns about the safety of refugees and asylum seekers in particular, believing they were especially vulnerable.

Other Issues

Twelve groups listed other issues not covered in the above themes.

Refugees and asylum seekers

Additional issues concerning asylum seekers and refugees were raised, including:

- Barriers to living a normal life
- Access to public funds
- Protection and rights for asylum seekers refused leave to remain
- Childcare for asylum seekers when they attend appointments with the Home Office
- The length of time asylum seekers wait to hear about immigration decisions

Other issues for these groups have been noted previously in this document at each section.

Immigration concerns

Several groups believed the Scottish government should have more power over issues of immigration. Some participants recorded immigration-specific concerns, such as:

- The difficulty of citizenship tests
- The right to live and work in the UK
- The speed of Home Office decisions
- The cost of and restrictions about bringing a foreign spouse or partner to live in the UK

Data collection and research

Some participants felt the government needed to be aware of the way it collected data on ethnicity – where appropriate, this should be done in a way that enables different minority ethnic groups to be considered separately, as in many cases grouping together into “non-white” or “minority ethnic” can cloud the truth. Groups felt that consultation with communities could help clarify this. It was also noted that recent migrants can have a very different experience in Scotland than established communities, and that this should be reflected in the data collection.

Issues concerning religion

Issues concerning religion were mentioned in discussions about work and money. While not directly related to race equality, some participants stated that the religious needs of communities need to be respected, particularly by employers. Respondents noted that having certain days of the week off work was very important to some religious groups, e.g. Sundays for Catholics.

Issues concerning religion were also mentioned in discussions about education. Some participants stated the need to balance educational activities with religious requirements, and ensure that when there is a potential conflict between education activity and religious activity, parents and pupils are given options and treated sensitively. It was suggested that schools provide appropriate alternative religious activities for children from non-Christian religious faiths whilst Christian pupils are undertaking religious observance.

Implementing the framework

Participants noted that they had an important role to play in implementing the framework, as they were representatives of the communities and should be involved on an ongoing basis.

Some groups also stressed that minority ethnic groups need to be kept aware of efforts being made to tackle racism, and want to hear about progress being made.

There was some concern that the current work around developing a race equality framework for Scotland may not reflect communities' concerns, despite the work undertaken by Community Ambassadors.

“The question we couldn’t answer is how will this be any different? Are our grievances and cries going to be addressed this time round? Is this forum going to realise an equal society? Are we going to hear back from the government through people carrying out this survey?”

Conclusion

The views gathered through CAP will be analysed alongside data and evidence gathered through desk-based research, four themed action forums, and an online survey. The content of the framework will then be developed with input from key stakeholders, and drafted collaboratively between the Scottish Government and CRER.

The aim of the consultation and research process is to ensure that all evidence is taken into account when developing the framework, and that a practical, user-friendly and effective final framework is created. Feedback will be provided to all those who contributed through CAP to demonstrate how their input shaped the final framework.

The Scottish Government plans to launch the final framework in Spring 2016.

Appendix

Organisations which nominated Community Ambassadors who completed the programme and contributed the community views within this evidence summary include:

- Active Life Club
- African Caribbean Women's Association
- African Scottish Development Organisation
- Amina Muslim Women's Resource Centre
- Association of African Communities in Renfrewshire
- Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights
- Edinburgh Women's Interfaith Group
- Karibu Scotland
- Lanarkshire Chinese Association
- Lithuanians in Scotland Association
- Maryhill Citizens Advice Bureau Refugee and Asylum Project
- MECOPP (Minority Ethnic Carers of Older People Project)
- Migrant Voice
- Minority Ethnic Mediation
- PKAVS Minority Communities Hub / MEAD
- Positive Action in Housing
- RCCG Potter's House
- Refugee Women Strategy Group
- RNIB Scotland Minority Ethnic Project
- Roshni
- SCOREscotland
- Scottish Asylum Seeker Residents Association
- Shakti Women's Aid
- Scottish Highlands & Islands and Moray Chinese Association
- Sikh Sanjog
- Sikorski Club / North Lanarkshire Polish Community Forum
- Stirling Multi Cultural Partnership
- Thai Buddharam Temple and Cultural Centre
- The Hidden Gardens Trust
- The Well
- Waverly Care
- WSREC Equality Response Forum