

# **Life in and around Norton Radstock**



## **The Experiences of Black and Minority Ethnic People**

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# **Partnership for Racial Identity of Diverse Ethnicities**

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## **Executive Summary**

This report describes a piece of research into the needs of black and other minority ethnic people in the Norton Radstock area of B&NES, which was carried out between September and December 2002. The research project was funded by the Single Regeneration Budget Scheme for Norton Radstock and managed by the B&NES Racial Equality Council. The research project had input from the PRIDE steering group (which was a group made up of representatives from the SRB scheme, the Bath & NES Racial Equality Council, the Local Authority and Avon and Somerset Constabulary).

### **Research aims and objectives**

There were two main strands to the research:

- To develop a programme of research and co-ordinate consultation with the black and minority ethnic communities within Midsomer Norton and Radstock in order to identify experiences and service needs.
- To consult with local statutory and voluntary agencies about the priority given to race equality in service delivery in the Norton Radstock area.

### **Research methods**

Discussions were held with a range of people working in statutory and voluntary sector agencies. With the help of two research assistants who lived in the Norton Radstock area, 35 black and other minority ethnic people were interviewed as part of the research.

### **Research findings – statutory and voluntary sector agencies**

The findings have not highlighted many complacent attitudes towards race equality. Indeed, many service provider organisations expressed an awareness of the impact that isolation and rural racism could have upon members of the community.

However, specific problems raised include a lack of systematic monitoring of service users, insufficient outreach work to build up links and identify needs, and, at times, a 'colour blind' approach in the provision of services to people who may have very different cultural needs. Further issues concern staffing, with many organisations having disproportionately low numbers of black and other minority ethnic staff (who also tend to be vertically segregated in lower level employment), and the difficulties with staff attitudes towards race equality issues.

### **Research findings – black and other minority ethnic people**

- Many black and other minority ethnic people experience feelings of isolation in the Norton Radstock area, where they stand out as being visibly different. Some interviewees talked of attempting to 'fit in' or 'blend in' within the community, which had at times resulted in a loss of self identity, and a 'denial' of their ethnic background. This negative impact upon self-identity seemed to be particularly acute for those from dual heritage backgrounds, many of who had experienced racist remarks from white family members.
- Whilst some of those who had experienced racism in schools felt that Headteachers had taken swift action to resolve problems, others were less positive about the action taken. In one case an interviewee had eventually moved her child to another school which had a more proactive approach to race equality. In other families with more limited resources this course of action might not be possible, which means that other children in similar circumstances may be suffering from ongoing racism which is not being dealt with.

- Many interviewees have experienced racism at work from service users, colleagues and employees. Many self-employed interviewees running shops and takeaways in the area had experienced racist abuse from customers. The perception of some interviewees was that this abuse was often due to boredom and fuelled by alcohol.
- Most of those who had experienced racist abuse from their neighbours had tended not to report it to the Police. It was felt that the Police would not be able to do anything to stop it, and that bringing in 'authority' would only incite more hostility from neighbours. Instead, most interviewees talked of trying to gain the respect of neighbours by being 'strong' and dealing with it themselves.
- Racist incidents had occurred even in leisure time. Examples of incidents in local pubs were given, with some interviewees stating that the reactions of pub landlords and customers had drastically limited their choice of venue, even for family outings to pub gardens.
- Some interviewees had encountered difficulties in using public transport. This had led to reluctance on the part of some to use local buses in the evenings, because of fear of racial abuse from groups of white male passengers. Many people in rural areas can feel cut off from local amenities if they have no transport of their own. This issue is compounded for black and other minority ethnic people if they feel unsafe using public transport.
- Some difficulties had arisen in accessing statutory services. These difficulties ranged from a lack of black and other minority ethnic GPs in the area, (who were judged by some interviewees to be better able to treat black and other minority ethnic patients), problems with cancelled appointments (without explanation), and stereotypical assumptions or racist remarks made by service providers.
- The suggestions made by interviewees as to what would improve the quality of their lives in the area related strongly to their experiences of isolation and difficulties being accepted within the community. Ideas were put forward as to the role that schools could play in preparing the new generation for life in an increasingly multi-racial and multi-cultural society. There was also a strong call from many interviewees for an opportunity to meet regularly in a local venue with other black and minority ethnic people and families as a means of providing mutual support and engendering a sense of belonging within the community.

Overall, the incidence of racism may well be similar to that experienced by black and other minority ethnic people living in more urban areas. However, in rural areas, this is coupled with isolation and a lack of support services within the community. In these circumstances racism can often go unreported and remain hidden, leaving service providers to assume there is 'no problem here'. As this research has shown, victims are often alone in dealing with problems associated with racism.

### **Recommendations**

Recommendations have been made which attempt to address:

- the take up of services;
- the reporting, recording and response to racist incidents;
- the ways in which services can better meet the needs of black and other minority ethnic people;
- the issue of racism during leisure time;
- the isolation experienced by many black and other minority ethnic people.

## **Part one: Introduction and context of the research**

### **Introduction**

This report describes a piece of research into the needs of black and other minority ethnic people in the Norton Radstock area of B&NES, which was carried out between September and December 2002. The research project was funded by the Single Regeneration Budget Scheme for Norton Radstock and managed by the Bath and NES Racial Equality Council. The research project had input from the PRIDE (Partnership for Racial Identity and Diverse Ethnicities) steering group (which was a group made up of representatives from the SRB scheme, the B&NES REC (Racial Equality Council), the Local Authority and Avon and Somerset Constabulary).

This introductory section of the report will outline what the research set out to achieve, through its specific aims and objectives. Secondly, a brief review of the key issues highlighted in previous research into the experiences and needs of black and minority ethnic people who live in rural areas will be given. Thirdly, the community profile of the Norton Radstock area will be outlined in general terms and then in relation to the size of the black and minority ethnic population. Finally, data on the number of reported racist incidents in the area, from both Police records and those of SARI (Support Against Racist Incidents) will be presented.

### **Research aims and objectives**

The aims and objectives of the research were formulated by the PRIDE steering group prior to the project commencing. These were laid down as follows:

With the support of the PRIDE working group and the B&NES REC to:

- Develop a programme of research and co-ordinate consultation with the black and minority ethnic communities within the Midsomer Norton and Radstock area
- Support, advise and train members of local groups and agencies, so as to build their capacity to contribute to the research and consultation process
- Collate and analyse the information obtained
- Produce a draft report for the B&NES REC to present to the PRIDE steering group, as a key part of the basis for a regeneration strategy
- Consult with local statutory and voluntary agencies
- Link in with all relevant and appropriate networks

- Provide comprehensive information and data about the size and service needs of the black and minority ethnic population in Midsomer Norton and Radstock
- Work alongside local organisations and black and minority ethnic communities in identifying the needs of black and other minority ethnic communities living within Midsomer Norton and Radstock in order to produce an action plan to address the needs highlighted.

A programme of work was developed by the research co-ordinator in order to meet these objectives within the agreed timetable. This, along with other methodological issues, is described in Part Two of the report, 'Research Design'.

### **Recent research on rural racism**

Until the Commission for Racial Equality published "Keep them in Birmingham": Challenging racism in South West England' (Jay, 1992), previous research into racism had tended to focus on urban areas. Jay's report began to highlight the nature and extent of racism in rural areas, its impact upon victims and also to detail the often complacent responses from public authorities. The more recent report 'Challenging Racism in the Rural Idyll' (Dhalech, 1999) states that:

"... most public and private agencies, but particularly local authorities and the voluntary sector, still need to be convinced of the importance of addressing race equality issues" (Dhalech, 1999, p69)

Both reports focus on the experiences of black and other minority ethnic people living in rural areas in the South West of England. The reports highlight the 'invisibility' of racism, as the majority of incidents are unreported. Furthermore, black and other minority ethnic people living in rural communities tend to be isolated and receive limited support. It has been found that victims tend to lack confidence to approach organisations for advice and support, and instead:

"... attempt to resolve the issues within the private circles of family and friends" (Dhalech, 1999, p71).

Services can be under-used because of a lack of awareness of the help that is available, and also because black and minority ethnic people may have had negative experiences of using agencies in the past.

Overall, with the underreporting of racist incidents, the reports highlight a tendency for public and voluntary sector agencies to adopt a 'no problem here' attitude: that there are a few black people, little evidence of racism and therefore no need to address race equality as a priority in service delivery.

## **Community profile of the Norton Radstock area**

The Youth and Community Service profile of Norton Radstock and the surrounding area (2001) provides useful background information on the area. This, together with information from the Radstock and Midsomer Norton website link ([www.radstocknet.co.uk](http://www.radstocknet.co.uk)) is especially useful in providing a summary of the historical development of the area. The two largest towns in the area are Midsomer Norton and Radstock. Midsomer Norton is detailed on the website as an 'ancient market town dating back to mediaeval times'. Radstock is a former mining and railway town located on the Roman Fosseway, previously served by the Somerset and Dorset Great Western Railway.

The Youth and Community Service profile states that:

"At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century there were 73 pits operating in the North Somerset locality yielding a thousand tons of coal daily and employing 10,000 people. Gradually the North Somerset Collieries were closed and the last mine at lower Writhlington stopped production in 1973"

The report goes on to add that visitors to the area are often struck by the diversity of towns and villages in the locality, which vary greatly in terms of size and amenities. Recent housing developments especially around the former colliery village of Peasdown St John are said to have 'changed the demographic structure of the area', and there are now visible signs of wealth amongst pockets of deprivation.

These historical roots of the Norton Radstock community are referred to by a number of people in Part 3 of the report, who believe them to be in part responsible for the current attitudes of residents, particularly towards those who are perceived as outsiders to what was once a close knit working class community.

## **The black and OME population of Norton Radstock**

The 2001 census data on ethnicity was not available at the time of writing. The 1991 Census (which is believed to under-record black and other minority ethnic groups by approximately 10 percent) shows that approximately 1.6 percent of the population of B&NES were from black and other minority ethnic groups, and that the majority of these lived in the Bath area. The Census data shows that, at the time, just over 0.4 percent of the population of Norton Radstock and surrounding area (including Midsomer Norton North, Midsomer Norton Redfield, Paulton, Peasdown St John, Radstock, Timsbury and Westfield) were from black and other minority ethnic groups. This adds up to a total of 145 people (40 of black African, African Caribbean and black other backgrounds, 9 of Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi backgrounds, and 96 of Chinese, Asian and other (dual heritage) backgrounds). A further 0.3 percent of the population (85 people) were born in the Irish Republic.

Other potential sources of data that might be available were explored to provide an interim estimate of the size of the black and other minority ethnic population of the Norton Radstock area. It was found that the Registry Office does not keep data on birth and ethnicity. Also, there is currently no ethnicity data available from health records through Avon Health Authority data sets or through B&NES Primary Care Trust. The response from health professionals was that it is not mandatory to collect and collate ethnicity data. Therefore, although there are ethnicity questions on some of the monitoring forms used in Child Surveillance and Health Visitor data sets, half the time these sections are not filled in and therefore none of this information is entered onto the computer.

Bath and North East Somerset Education Department Research and Development section were able to provide data on the ethnicity of school pupils in the Norton Radstock area. Making adjustments for pupils for whom no ethnicity form was submitted, this data shows that, in secondary schools in the Norton Radstock area, in January 2002, approximately 0.7 percent of pupils (23 young people) were from black and other minority ethnic groups, with a further 0.2 percent (2 young people) from white other groups. In Infant, junior and primary schools the data shows that, for the same period, approximately 1.4 percent of pupils (36 young people) were from black and other minority ethnic groups with a further 0.25 percent (12 young people) from white other groups

Of these 59 school age children attending schools in the area, the data shows 32 were from 'other'/dual heritage backgrounds, 13 were from Chinese backgrounds, nine were from black African, African Caribbean or black other backgrounds and five were from Indian, Pakistani or Bangladeshi backgrounds.

Although this data only provides information on school age children attending schools in the area, it seems to suggest that once the 2002 census data is available, it will show that the black and other minority ethnic population of Norton Radstock has grown in the past 10 years since the 1991 Census was conducted.

### **Data on reported racist incidents**

It is likely that a large number of racist incidents are unreported (to either the Police or other organisations and support services) and therefore go unrecorded. The reasons for victims not include a lack of awareness of the support that might be available, a lack of confidence in the ability of authorities to help resolve problems, and a fear that bringing in agencies might only make things worse. This was found to be the case in this research (see Part 4 of the report).

The voluntary sector organisation SARI (Support Against Racist Incidents), who support and advise the victims of racist incidents in the region, gave details of the number of racist incidents in the Norton Radstock area which had been reported to them recently. From April 2001 to April 2002 there were a total of four cases in the area (three of these were in Radstock and one was in

a village on the Norton Radstock borders). In B&NES as a whole there were a total of 36 cases. These 36 cases involved 103 clients who were affected. Of those 51 were black, 33 were dual heritage, and 19 were white.

From April 2001 to end of March 2002 there were six Police cases of racial incidents in the Norton Radstock area. Two occurred in Radstock, and four in Midsomer Norton. Three victims were Turkish, one was black British, one was white British and one person's ethnicity was unknown. Four of these cases went to court and in three of the cases the offenders were found guilty (in the fourth case there was found to be insufficient evidence to proceed). Of the other two cases, one offender apologised to the victim and one was not pursued further because of a lack of evidence.

Across the whole of B&NES, between March 1999 and March 2000, only six maintained schools in the area reported racist incidents to the LEA. A report to the Education Committee states that 'this is unlikely to reflect the true picture' and suggests that further strategies need to be employed by the LEA to encourage schools to record and report racist incidents, and that staff training and awareness will be a necessary part of this.

In the course of meetings with service providers in the first stages of the research two people mentioned a racist assault that had taken place at a takeaway on the High Street in Midsomer Norton. The Somerset Guardian was contacted to provide archive reports of this incident and any others in the Norton Radstock area.

## **Summary and conclusions**

The first section of the report has served to provide a background to the research by outlining the aims and objectives and providing a profile of the Norton Radstock community both in general terms and in respect of the black and other minority ethnic population. Research on racism in rural areas, its impact upon victims and the response of organisations has been summarised to provide a backdrop to this research and potential issues that might arise.

The rest of the report is structured as follows. Part Two focuses on the way that the research was designed in order to meet the objectives. This includes details of the research methods that were used and an explanation of why particular approaches were selected (the 'methodology'). In Part Three the research findings in relation to statutory and voluntary sector service providers are presented. Part Four provides an analysis of the interviews with black and minority ethnic people who took part in the research (including their experiences of racism, isolation and access to services). Finally, in Part Five of the report, detailed conclusions and recommendations are presented.

## **Part Two: Research design**

### **Introduction**

This section of the report describes the way that the research was designed and the role played by PRIDE (Partnership for Racial Identity of Diverse Ethnicities), the research steering group. The involvement of two local research assistants is explained, and details are given as to how these local research assistants contributed to the research design and accessed research participants. Their experiences (in their own words) of being involved in the research are set out. The process of carrying out the interviews (which were conducted by the research assistants and the research co-ordinator) is described, along with the way that the findings were analysed. The problems, constraints and opportunities that arose during the course of the research are summarised.

### **The management of the research**

At the outset, time was scheduled in for a meeting with the Director at B&NES REC (who was to manage the research). At this meeting, the research objectives were examined and a timetable based around these was developed. The Director of the REC left her post three weeks into this project and after that the research was managed by a combination of the Chair and the Vice Chair of the REC.

A steering group (PRIDE) was already in place to oversee the research design and process. Membership of this group involved the B&NES Racial Equality Council, Avon and Somerset Constabulary and B&NES Council staff (including the Local Partnerships Manager and the Corporate Equalities Officer). A number of meetings were held with members of this steering group throughout the period of the research.

Due to the short nature of this research project (three months) there was limited time available for an orientation period. However, background reading for the research included recent research into rural racism, which helped to highlight particular issues that might arise in the research. Along with this, a report on the community profile of the Norton Radstock area, written by the B&NES Youth and Community Service provided a useful backdrop to the context of the research.

### **Fulfilling the research objectives**

There were two main strands to the research project. The first part involved meeting with staff from a range of statutory and voluntary sector organisations that provide services in the area (details of the range of organisations that took part in the research are given in Part Three of the report). The focus of these interviews varied according to the role of the individual interviewee. For those interviewees with strategic responsibilities, discussions tended to focus on the stated aims and policy of the organisation. The main aim of these interviews with 'strategic' staff, who could speak on behalf of their organisation, was to

assess the extent to which race equality was perceived to be an important issue in service delivery and employment practice in the Norton Radstock area. Also, where relevant, the opportunity was used to explore the impact that the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 had had on service delivery. Interviews with staff who had no strategic responsibilities focused more on issues that had arisen or were arising in the actual delivery of services. These interviews gave a picture of what was happening 'on the ground' in organisations, and how frontline practitioners were identifying and responding to the needs of black and minority ethnic service users and potential service users.

The second strand of the research project involved accessing and interviewing black and other minority ethnic people to find out their experiences of living (or working) in the Norton Radstock area. The aim of these interviews was to highlight feelings of isolation, experiences of racism and difficulties in accessing services.

### **Using local researchers**

One of the objectives of the research was to involve residents of Norton Radstock in carrying out the research, as a means of contributing to 'capacity building' within the community. Research assistants were sought to help carry out the second strand of the research (accessing and interviewing local black and other minority ethnic people). A research brief (See Appendix 1) was prepared and circulated to members of the Black Families Education Support Group who reside within the area. Also, SARI (Support Against Racist Incidents) made contact with those who had used their services within the Norton Radstock area. With this approach, two women responded, who had both had direct experience of racism within their families and lived in the area.

At an initial meeting with the two research assistants, further details of what the research would involve were discussed. The role of the research assistants was to contribute to the research design (particularly to the schedule of questions that were to be used with research participants), access interviewees, conduct interviews and feedback the results to the research co-ordinator. The research co-ordinator also undertook interviews. Support was on hand for the research assistants throughout their involvement either in person or over the telephone, and each was paid for preparation time and time spent accessing interviewees. A fixed rate was paid per interview conducted. These fees were set by the research co-ordinator and met out of the overall project budget.

The experiences of the two researchers are detailed at the end of this section of the report.

### **Accessing black and other minority ethnic interviewees**

A combination of approaches was used to find interviewees. A flyer to attract potential interviewees was designed (see Appendix 2). As an incentive, it was agreed that each interviewee would be given a £10 voucher for taking part. This was also met from the overall project budget. The implications of using a

voucher as an incentive are discussed later within this section. The flyer was circulated amongst all the organisations that took part in the research, and included the following:

- Black Families Education support Group
- Norton Radstock Family Centre
- Local schools who took part in the research
- Chinese/Indian restaurants and takeaways

Other means of accessing interviewees included the Bath Islamic Centre who provided contact details for potential interviewees within the Norton Radstock area. At times, an opportunistic approach was used when black and other minority ethnic people were met by chance in the Norton Radstock area (whilst researchers were out shopping, at the swimming pool and so on) and given information about the research. However, the most successful method in accessing interviewees was through the contacts made by the two local research assistants who were able to approach people they already knew within the community. This included people within their local neighbourhoods, shops, other parents at school and so on.

The aim at the beginning of the research was to use a 'snowballing' technique, where each interviewee is asked to pass on details of the research to any of their contacts that might be interested in taking part. Interviewees were always asked to pass on information to others, and further contacts were made using this approach.

### **Sample achieved**

A total of 35 black and other minority ethnic people were interviewed during the research. Even if the black and other minority ethnic population has doubled since the 1991 Census was conducted, then this figure still represents well over more 10 percent of the black and other minority ethnic population. As is pointed out in Part Four of the report, which details the findings from the interviews, whilst this might seem a rather low number of interviews to provide an account of the experiences of black and other minority ethnic people within the area, many interviewees were part of wider family groups and were able to recount the experiences of their partners, parents, children and siblings. Therefore, the experiences of more than 100 people, most of whom are from black or other minority ethnic backgrounds and who reside in Norton Radstock have been voiced by the 35 people who were interviewed in the research.

### **Carrying out the interviews**

An interview schedule was developed by the research co-ordinator and research assistants, with input from members of the research Steering Group (see Appendix 3). This schedule covered personal experiences of living or working in the area, an opportunity to give examples of racism encountered at school, at work, within the neighbourhood and during leisure time. Interviewees were also given opportunities to talk about barriers in accessing

services. The schedule was piloted with three interviewees and some minor amendments were made.

Interviews were conducted between October and November 2002. Most of the interviews were conducted on a one-to-one basis, although some interviewees were interviewed in pairs.

A variety of places were used for carrying out interviews, depending upon the wishes of the interviewee. Interviews were conducted in cafes, pubs, takeaways, workplaces, Town Council offices and interviewees' homes. Interviews lasted on average approximately 45 minutes, with the shortest interview lasting approximately 30 minutes and the longest (e.g. those conducted in pairs, or in takeaways when the interviewee had to break off to serve customers) taking more than an hour.

It was felt that recording interviews would be too intrusive and off-putting for interviewees, especially given the difficult conditions under which some interviews were conducted. Therefore, detailed notes of responses were taken down, using, where possible, the exact words of interviewees. Care was taken to ensure that the meaning had been interpreted correctly, through use of verbal paraphrasing, and then by reading back the words noted down. Whilst this may have taken a little longer than it would have done had a recorder been used, it is believed that this approach achieved an openness on the part of interviewees with their views and experiences that might otherwise not have been the case.

Interviewees were given a voucher for taking part at the end of their interview. All interviewees were asked if they would like to be sent a copy of the report. Contact details of those who were interested in this were noted. Interviewees were given details of local agencies that could offer support in relation to racism.

### **Analysing the results**

A similar approach was used to analyse both the results of the meetings with people from voluntary and statutory agencies and the interviews with black and other minority ethnic people. However, the notes made during meetings with agency staff were emailed to them after the interview, giving an opportunity to amend and add further comments if they wished.

The data from each interview schedule was entered into a word document, which was broken down to follow the outline of the interview schedule. Data, including the exact words of interviewees, were entered under each heading, with new headings or codes being developed as sub-categories within each section. These codes or sub-categories represented particular ideas or perceptions of interviewees in relation to the range of open questions that were asked.

By the end of the interviewing phase, the document containing the data from interviews with black and other minority ethnic people was more than 30 pages long, and included the experiences, views and perceptions of each

interviewee. This was then written up into the findings section of the report, which represents Part Four of the report.

The findings include quotations from interviewees. As has been stated earlier, care was taken to check back with interviewees that what had been written down represented a true picture of their views. Whilst at times the words in quotes may not be exactly word for word what was said, it is believed that the quotes do represent the meaning intended by the interviewee.

### **Problems, constraints and opportunities arising**

Here, the difficulties and opportunities that arose during the course of the research are outlined.

- *Accessing interviewees*

Whilst a few people responded to the flyer by telephone or email, overall, direct approaches to people, either individually or through community groups, proved the most effective way of accessing interviewees. Having the opportunity as a researcher to explain about the research face to face seemed to make it less intimidating for those willing to take part. This method also enabled trust to be built up first, with the interviewee having an opportunity to size up the researcher before deciding whether or not to opt in. However, this type of approach took time; many people were approached more than once before they agreed to take part.

Another effective means of accessing interviewees was through the two research assistants who lived within the area. For each of the two research assistants, being a familiar face in their local area, and having children attending local schools gave both assistants the opportunity for different points of connection with many potential interviewees.

- *Arranging interviews*

Arranging interviews was time consuming. Those who had made contact via email, or through leaving a telephone message, were sometimes difficult to track down, with two or three calls or emails needed before an interview time and place could be agreed. One interviewee did not turn up at the agreed time, having forgotten about the arrangement.

Finding a place to interview people was sometimes difficult. Places that had been agreed sometimes proved too busy, and nearby alternatives had to be found. It is not usually good practice to interview people in their own homes (because of being intrusive to interviewees and a potential risk to the researcher). However, some interviews were conducted in the homes of interviewees where it had been difficult to find an alternative and the interviewee had offered it as an option.

- *Initial 'no problems' responses*

Some interviewees seemed rather hesitant at the beginning of interviews to discuss their experiences openly, and only after encouragement and prompting began to recall and recount experiences of prejudice and hostility. Researchers described similar experiences with interviewees,

where it appeared that these experiences had been 'bottled up' inside for so long, that there was an initial denial on the part of the interviewee of their existence. For some interviewees, 'putting on a brave face' and not drawing attention to their difficulties had been mechanisms for coping with the racism they had experienced in isolation. At times the interview process itself served to bring some of these experiences to the surface, and helped interviewees to acknowledge that they had suffered racism.

- *Vouchers*

One of the possible disadvantages of using vouchers as an incentive to attract interviewees is that some people will be drawn to the research solely because of the voucher rather than because they have something to contribute to the topic area. However, without exception, interviewees appeared to have been drawn to take part in the research because they felt they had something to contribute, and saw the voucher as an additional draw rather than the sole reason for taking part.

- *Attributing weight to issues and concerns*

During Part 4 of the report, at times the exact numbers of people who expressed a particular view or had experienced a particular issue have been given. However, at other times more approximate figures are given, such as 'more than half those interviewed' or 'one or two'. This is because the findings are not being presented as scientifically robust, but as a detailed and in depth insight into the views and experiences of a small number of people. It may be that during Part Four, at times the views being expressed are held by only one or two people. In this research, less weight should not be given to matters raised in isolation as they often represent the views and experiences of individuals who have developed a wider perspective on events and issues.

### **Research Assistants: experience of working on the project**

The comments below describe the process of being involved in the research from the perspective of the two research assistants.

Lisa comments:

*I was really excited to be involved in the research. I know a few people and have contacts locally, so that made it feel easy at first. I thought that one person would lead to another. However, this didn't really happen that much: most people I interviewed didn't have contact with other black and minority ethnic people in the area. I think this illustrates the isolation people are experiencing, and most of them have no extended family in Norton Radstock either.*

*So, the emphasis changed to a more difficult approach of actually finding people to interview. Being local, I have noticed where some people work, and I've seen families using local facilities, like the sports centre. So I approached these people, and told them about the project, giving them some written information. It was a bit disheartening at times when some of these people didn't get back in touch with me.*

*I went to restaurants and takeaways as well. What was interesting was that the initial response was often 'we've got nothing to say about racism really', but I found that if I managed to engage people in conversation, they would begin to talk about experiences of racism, that they had just grown to accept as normal.*

*As for doing the interviews, some of it was very moving. A couple of the people I interviewed have told me that taking part in the research has made them feel that they would like to explore their own identities and ethnic backgrounds more, and that they now feel the need to meet with others to share experiences. The project seems to have sparked that off.*

*I did feel a bit vulnerable at times during the research. Even though I have experienced racism personally and dealt with it, hearing about the racism other people had experienced locally seemed to heighten my own awareness of the fact that I am different, and in a minority in Norton Radstock.*

Pippa comments:

*Personally, I got a lot out of being involved.*

*When it came to finding people to take part in the project, originally I made a list of all the people I know, all the people I'd seen around that I knew I could approach. I handed out information to these people, but the one's I thought would be interested actually turned out not to be the people who said they wanted to be involved.*

*I knew we needed to get a good cross section of people, so after I had approached the black people I knew, I then started to visit local businesses and takeaways. Once I started, I realised that it's not that difficult to approach people. The interview schedule was useful as a starting point to open up discussions, but each interview was very different. Sometimes we seemed to spend longer on one area than another, depending upon what seemed most significant to the person I was interviewing at the time.*

*Some interviews were more in depth than others. It seemed that once people realised that I had experienced racism in my dual heritage family, they were more open to me, especially as I am white. I guess I wanted people to know that this is something I'm passionate about because it's affected my family. It wasn't just a job: it was really important to me personally so I made an effort to make the project a success.*

*One time, I had arranged to interview just one person, but the interviewee turned up with several friends who all wanted to be heard with their experiences as well. That was really moving, and it made me feel even more strongly that these issues need to be addressed.*

*I feel we have started something here, begun to uncover racism, and given people the chance to talk about it. I know that a lot of people who took part in*

*the research were not very optimistic that the results would be used to make a difference in the area. It would be so good if we could prove them wrong.*

### **Summary and conclusions**

This section of the report has set out how the research was conducted, giving details of what was done (the research tools that were used) and why it was done in that way. Also listed are some of the issues that arose in the course of the research in terms of constraints and opportunities.

The benefits of using two local residents as research assistants in this project cannot be stressed enough. Their personal experiences helped to shape the research design, and their enthusiasm and tenacity resulted in many more interviewees being accessed than would have been the case without their help.

In describing the process of the research, an attempt has been made not to hide the difficulties that arose but to be open about them, and to state how problems were coped with. This is based upon the notion that the more that is concealed within research, the less valid the research findings will be. Overall, although there were some limitations, I am confident that data has been collected and analysed in a systematic way and that this research allows conclusions to be drawn in respect of the experiences of black and other minority ethnic groups in the Norton Radstock area, and potential barriers in accessing services.

## **Part Three: Research findings: Statutory and voluntary sector agencies**

### **Introduction and overview**

This section of the report highlights the findings of the research in relation to the data gathered from interviews with service providers in a range of voluntary and statutory sector organisations. The focus of these interviews varied according to the role of the individual interviewee. For those interviewees with strategic responsibilities, discussions tended to focus on the stated aims and policy of the organisation. The main aim of these interviews with 'strategic' staff, who could speak on behalf of their organisation, was to assess the extent to which race equality was perceived to be an important issue in service delivery and employment practice in the Norton Radstock area. Also, where relevant, the opportunity was used to explore the impact that the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 had had on service delivery. Interviews with staff who had no strategic responsibilities focused more on issues that had arisen or were arising in the actual delivery of services. These interviews gave a picture of what was happening 'on the ground' in organisations, and how frontline practitioners were identifying and responding to the needs of black and minority ethnic service users and potential service users.

As mentioned above, a selection of people working in statutory and voluntary organisations were interviewed. Although an attempt was made to include a broad range of organisations that provide services in the area, because of the short timescale of the research project, it was not possible to cover each and every agency. Therefore, although there are undoubtedly some gaps, what follows should be used as a sample of policy statements from, and views and experiences of those working for, a broad cross section of organisations in the area at the time of the research.

Interviewees from the following organisations took part in the research: Avon and Somerset Constabulary, B&NES Primary Care Trust, B&NES Council Social and Housing Services, Community Development, Sport and Leisure and Youth Services departments, Somer Housing, Norton Radstock Town Council, North East Somerset Citizen's Advice Bureau, the Care Network, Norton Radstock Family Centre, Voluntary First, South Wansdyke Advice Network, Support Against Racist Incidents (SARI), the Bath Islamic Centre, the Black and other minority ethnic Senior Citizen's Project and STAR (Support and Training in Anti Racism to under 8s workers). Within the Education sector, one junior school and one primary school in the Norton Radstock area were asked for their views and experiences, along with three Secondary Schools and Norton Radstock College.

At times this section of the report raises concerns in connection with a particular organisation or service and race equality matters. The PRIDE steering group will be taking these issues back to the organisations in question.

## **Race equality schemes, statements and policies**

The Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 requires all public authorities to observe a general duty to:

- eliminate unlawful racial discrimination
- promote equal opportunities
- promote good relations between people of different racial groups

The aim of this 'general duty' is for organisations to make race equality a central part of the way that they carry out their functions. In order to do this, the Act places a requirement on public authorities to develop a Race Equality Scheme (the deadline for which was 31<sup>st</sup> May 2002). This Scheme should list all the functions and policies of the organisation that are relevant to the duty to promote race equality. Also, the following should be included: details of how all policies will be monitored for both adverse impact and positive impact on race equality, arrangements for ensuring that the public have access to the results of these assessments and monitoring exercises and details of how staff will be trained to carry out their work to support the Act. Public Authority employers also are required to carry out ethnic monitoring of staff currently employed, job applicants, and which staff apply for promotion and training opportunities. Public Authorities with more than 150 employees also have a duty to monitor by ethnicity who actually receives training, benefits or suffers from performance appraisals, is involved in grievances, subject to disciplinary action, or leaves their post (for whatever reason).

All but one of the statutory sector organisations that were contacted had developed a Race Equality Scheme (one secondary school Headteacher said that the school was still in the process of developing a scheme and had not forwarded a copy of it by the time that the report was written).

A range of views were expressed about the impact of the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000. The B&NES Primary Care Trust Chief Executive stressed that the Board was committed to equalities, and that the Trust recognised its duty under the Race Relations Amendment Act and had developed a Race Equality Scheme. However, she went on to say that the Board, Executive and staff had recently undertaken a training programme on 'diversity' which focused on 'valuing the individual', adding that the ethos of diversity training with its individual focus was preferable to that of race equality. The Trust had set up an Equalities Forum (which reports directly to the board), which is made up of managers within the PCT, and local organisations such as the Racial Equality Council had been invited to participate. Whilst the business plan included race equality objectives, the demands of other areas of work were evident:

“The Board doesn't spend a vast amount of time on race equality work, because there is a full government agenda of priorities and targets in relation to health needs: very few issues get a lot of air time. Plus, the current deficit is £12 million” (PCT Chief exec).

For some, the development of a Race Equality Scheme or policy had not been solely due to the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000. Avon and Somerset

Constabulary had already developed a Race Equality Strategy following the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry, which had been modified to take into account the Race Relations Amendment Act. When asked about the internal climate in respect of race equality matters, a police officer described a recent police training event:

“...it appears that there is still quite a lot of resentment on the part of Officers who feel aggrieved for being branded institutionally racist... but generally, the biggest problem in the past here has been the attitude that ‘we treat everyone the same’” (Police Officer, Avon and Somerset Constabulary)

He added that things had moved on and officers were more tuned in to the issues, saw the need to treat everyone according to their individual needs and looked more carefully for signs of racially motivated incidents.

In SOMER housing, the development of a Race Equality Strategy was said to be about the need to implement good practice, as well as needing to implement the findings from other reports such as the Macpherson Report and the Race and Housing Inquiry. Somer Housing is not included as a public body under the terms of the Act:

“... because under the terms of the Act we are not included as a public body, we do not have the direct duty in relation to the ‘promotion’ of race equality and cultural diversity that local authorities now have, but we are expected to act in the spirit of the Act and support the local authority through any partnership arrangements we have”.

Therefore the Board and all staff had been briefed on the Race Relations Amendment Act, and the organisation was meeting the requirements of the Housing Corporation’s code which had been influenced by the changes in legislation and the Macpherson report.

B&NES Council had developed a Race Equality Action plan alongside its Race Equality Scheme, which included taking action in line with the Commission for Racial Equality’s (CRE) Standards for local government. As far as the impact of the Race Relations Amendment Act was concerned, a senior Manager in B&NES Council Social Services Department stated that the recognition of differing needs within the black and other minority ethnic community is a key part of the amended Act:

“...we need to recognise the diversity *within* the black and other minority ethnic population. We need to recognise and monitor access to services within communities” (Head of Adult Care and Commissioning Services)

He added that many adults who were in contact with Adult Services had disabilities, and that:

“... people from black and other minority ethnic groups can face double discrimination on account of their disability and their ethnicity/colour/background/religion... it is a key and important issue”.

As well as internal policies and procedures, the Sport and Leisure Development Manager stressed that all organisations that the Sport and Leisure department work with have EO policies.

Of the schools that were contacted during the research, all but one had developed a Race Equality Scheme. In one secondary school, the Race Equality Scheme included an overview of the context of the catchment area for the school and an acknowledgement that this predominantly white community brought with it the risk of:

“... ‘rural racism’ fuelled by ignorance and suspicion of different cultures and values” (Headteacher)

Similarly, another Headteacher stated the local importance of race equality policies and initiatives:

“As a school we’re aware that it’s more important because of the community being predominantly white” (Headteacher)

In one school, the Headteacher explained how the issue of race equality had arisen before the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 came into being, due to a parent asking how welcoming the then all white school would be if she sent her dual heritage child there. From that point, the school realised the importance of reviewing staff attitudes, policies and procedures to ensure that it could consciously operate in a way that promoted race equality.

As far as voluntary sector organisations were concerned, these are not required to develop a Race Equality Scheme under the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000. However, all those interviewed had Equal Opportunities policies (a funding requirement), of which race equality was a constituent part.

### **Perceptions of the Norton Radstock area**

Some people from service provider organisations commented on aspects of the Norton Radstock area as being relevant to the research and to the delivery of race equality policies.

The industrial mining background of the Norton Radstock area was held by some to have contributed to the current attitudes and aspirations of many residents. There was talk of the ‘low aspirations’ of many residents and an ‘insular attitude’, even amongst young people, most of whom were thought to limit themselves to the immediate area when searching for jobs. A number of interviewees stated that there are pockets of extreme deprivation in the area. These ‘insular attitudes’, coupled with poverty and deprivation were thought by

some to have an adverse impact upon those who are perceived as ‘outsiders’ to the community. One Headteacher commented:

“Some local people are racist because of rural isolation. In small communities, people can feel hard done by. Where there is a lack of resources, attitudes may be negative towards newcomers to the community. Families in crisis have in the past been housed in the same neighbourhoods... and this adds to the problems” (Headteacher)

Another Headteacher commented that changing children’s attitudes was one thing but that

“... there is a bigger problem outside the school. Radstock is insular. People are hugely insular – it’s like a time warp. You can talk to children about world events and they haven’t a clue what you’re talking about. Few people go to Bath... a lot don’t have much money, transport is difficult, and some people can’t afford bus fares. Parents make racist remarks at home and children learn not to bring it into school. Some lead a double life...”

However, at the same time, a Police Officer commented that he had encountered a ‘no problem here’ response when talking about racism with members of the community. The view of local people often seems to be that there are very few black or minority ethnic people in the area and therefore there are no problems with racism.

One comment from a voluntary sector organisation was that the Norton Radstock area can feel cut off from central Bath, even though it is part of the Council geographically. There was a view that

“... money is thrown into Bath... Bath is seen to be where the need is” (Manager, Voluntary Sector)

Along the same lines, another voluntary sector worker pointed out that a lot of services tend to be Bath based (e.g. people with mental health problems have to go to Bath for the out of hours drop in centre). In relation to the priorities within the Norton Radstock area, one person expressed great concern that a large amount of SRB money had not been used to deal with some of the local key priorities. It was felt that too much money had been put into the physical environment (such as new paved areas in Midsomer Norton) instead of being used to make a real difference to the lives of isolated people within the locality.

### **The size of local black and other minority ethnic population**

As was highlighted in Part One of this report, the 2001 census data on ethnicity was not available at the time of writing. Unsurprisingly, therefore, what came across in discussions with service provider organisations in both the voluntary and the statutory sectors was a general lack of awareness of the current size and ethnic mix of the black and other minority ethnic population of the Norton Radstock area. The only exception to this was the Local Education

Authority, which was able to provide ethnicity data from schools across B&NES. However, one head teacher of a local secondary school pointed out that dual heritage children at the school tend to define themselves as white. This raises some questions as to the accuracy and consistency of monitoring figures based on self-identification.

Ethnic monitoring of service users had begun in some organisations, but still had not provided a clear picture of the ethnicity of users. For example, Somer Housing began recording the ethnicity of all new tenants since 1999 but stated:

“In B&NES as a whole, the biggest problem for us is that we don’t know who our tenants are and we don’t know where they are. When the stock was in the hands of the council, no ethnic monitoring was done, so we don’t know anything about the vast majority of residents. Since 1999 however, as a registered social landlord regulated by the Housing Corporation, every time we let a tenancy we have to send information (which includes ethnicity) to the Housing Corporation” (SOMER Housing)

This issue, particularly the lack of ethnic monitoring of service users is returned to later in this section.

## **Awareness of the needs and experiences of the local black and other minority ethnic community**

### ***Racism in rural areas***

As was highlighted in Part One, the experience of racism can be compounded if it is coupled with the isolation so often felt in rural areas. Local support agencies and community organisations confirmed this. A worker from SARI (Support Against Racist Incidents) commented:

“Racism is much more difficult in rural areas: there’s the isolation and people are unplugged from community support. A lot is hidden because people don’t report it... it chips away at self-esteem. People sense an underlying hostility” (SARI Worker)

The Imam at the Bath Islamic Centre commented that people were very concerned about their children, about sending them to school, or taking them from one place to another. He explained that there is a constant fear on the part of parents because they and their children stand out: “... there is apprehension all the time”.

Overall, most interviewees from statutory and voluntary sector organisations acknowledged the existence and potential impact of rural racism in Norton Radstock. In other words, the ‘no problem here’ attitude was seldom expressed. Instead many people from local organisations acknowledged that racism was a feature of the lives of local black and other minority ethnic people. The following two comments highlight the views of two people working with children and families:

“ ... in rural areas it doubly compounds the isolation people can experience. You may be in a community where you are the only Asian person” (Norton Radstock Family Centre).

“It’s more important that we get it right here... well not more important but as important. Because there are so few black and ethnic minority people they are very vulnerable... A lot of children in Radstock have never seen non-white children” (Headteacher).

For some organisations, there was a recognition that service users experience isolation because of the nature of their role (e.g. caring). This isolation was considered to be more harsh for black and other minority ethnic carers.

### **Complacent attitudes**

Overall, there were few ‘no problem here’ responses on the part of service providers in the area. However, in one school that was telephoned to take part in the research, the Headteacher said that a 30-minute meeting to discuss the issues further was not possible:

“I’m extremely busy (...) and it’s not something we have a huge problem with” (Headteacher)

She explained that the school had only four black or other minority ethnic children, and that her experience in the school was in stark contrast to time she had spent in inner city schools with more pupils from diverse backgrounds. When asked about the impact that the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 had had upon the school she stated that she believed her school was not under the same obligation to take as much action as a school with larger numbers of black and other minority ethnic children. This is not the case, as the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 applies equally to all schools, even those with only two or three black or other minority ethnic children.

The response was worrying as there seemed to be an implicit assumption that prejudiced attitudes are held in proportion to the numbers of black and other minority ethnic children: that less black and other minority ethnic children means less racism. Another Headteacher in a different school expressed similar views:

“Overall, racism is not a big issue in the school because there aren’t large numbers of black or other minority ethnic children. Therefore it’s not a big problem” (Headteacher)

However, when given an opportunity to reflect on this statement, the Headteacher added “prejudiced attitudes are a problem”.

Whilst the Headteacher of the first school sent a copy of the schools Race Equality Scheme, it is clear that paper policies and commitments fall short of the requirement to proactively promote race equality. It should also be noted that although all four Headteachers in other schools that were approached were busy, each responded very positively to the suggestion of a meeting, which served to give an indication of their level of commitment.

The CAB raised issues to do with a lack of awareness of racism locally in the contact it had had with outside agencies

“... if you talk to (local organisations) and you start to talk about racist issues, they think you’re off the wall (...)they don’t believe you because it’s invisible” (CAB)

The CAB manager went on to add that he felt local community leaders and councillors had missed an opportunity to make a public statement condemning racism following a recent racist attack upon a local business.

Whilst these “no problem here” types of responses were seldom encountered during the course of the research, they were found in a small number of organisations. They will be returned to in Part Five of the report.

### ***The use of services by black and other minority ethnic people***

In a number of organisations there was an anxiety that very few black and other minority ethnic people in the Norton Radstock area were accessing the services provided. However, due to the lack of up to date ethnicity figures within the community, as was explained previously, it was unclear as to whether the low number of users was a mere reflection of the low numbers in the population as a whole. A number of voluntary sector organisations expressed concern about this and these included South Wansdyke Advice Network (SWAN) who stated that they had only one intermittent service user from the black and ethnic minority community, but that there were currently no resources for outreach work:

“... what we’re not doing is actively seeking people from other minority ethnic groups. We’re so busy with our existing service users, we’re already over-stretched” (SWAN)

Similarly, the CAB commented that in spite of some outreach work, there might be barriers to using the services:

“I can’t put my hand on my heart and say that black and other minority ethnic people know we’re here for them. We’ve done some reaching out but I don’t know what people feel about using the service” (CAB)

One reason put forward for what appeared to be an under use of some services was the tendency for many groups and services to be located in Bath. For example, the Ethnic Minority Senior Citizens Lunch Club currently has no members from outside the Bath area. The main way that new members are recruited is by word of mouth from other members and through Social Services. Social Services had agreed to meet the travel costs of a previous member from Norton Radstock once it was shown that her needs could not be met in Norton Radstock itself. Voluntary First had begun some work with two ethnic minority community groups in Bath, but there are currently no such groups in the Norton Radstock area.

Other potential reasons for the under use of services were put forward as a lack of knowledge about the services offered, or possible negative associations with project managers (e.g. the Police 'Key Project' for young vulnerable people has attracted very few black and other minority ethnic people, and none at all from Norton Radstock).

A few organisations were seeing disproportionately higher numbers of black and other minority ethnic people. At the risk of stereotyping, it could be assumed that some of this 'over representation' might be due to certain services being targeted at vulnerable people. For example, the Norton Radstock Family Centre open services were attracting seven percent of users from Asian/dual heritage backgrounds. Somer Housing, who were monitoring their current lettings, had exceeded their target in letting 5.7 percent of tenancies in the B&NES area as a whole to black and OME people from 2001-2002.

Health visitors gave details of a range of families they had worked with in the Norton Radstock area. These were from different minority ethnic backgrounds, including Black British, Indian, Chinese, Japanese and Korean, some of whom were students from the University of Bath who had come to live in the area on a temporary basis.

One of the main problems raised by organisations was whether barriers exist that are preventing people from accessing services. Finding out about needs and barriers from the local black and other minority ethnic community had proved difficult, and the following comment sums up the experiences of other organisations:

“... a lot of what we know is anecdotal. A real handicap we've had to acknowledge is that black and ethnic minority people haven't come through the resident involvement structure so their voices aren't heard. In B&NES it is difficult to access black and other minority ethnic people in other ways, i.e. through community groups, because there are not many of them. We are asking people about services all the time and there's a gap. It makes us uneasy. We haven't got confirmation that there are no unintentional barriers” (Somer Housing).

The next section goes on to examine some of the areas of need that have been identified by service providers.

## **Needs identified**

### ***Needs around discrimination.***

Advice services in the Norton Radstock area had identified needs and potential needs within the black and other minority ethnic population around the issue of discrimination in employment and housing. The CAB had made contact with a local business following a racist attack which had been reported in the Somerset Guardian, offering support and confidential advice and assistance in dealing with the racist attacks and any other issues.

### ***Health needs***

The B&NES Primary Care Trust chief executive explained that the Equalities Forum were looking at particular areas of need within the local black and other minority ethnic community and needs already identified included mental health in the Chinese community, and access to blood disorder services at the RUH. An event to raise awareness within the community of blood disorders had been organised by B&NES Black and Other Minority Ethnic Communities Health Forum in September 2000.

### ***Language issues***

A number of organisations had identified language as a potential barrier to accessing services. B&NES council Head of Adult and Commissioning Services stated that a current concern was to do with language barriers within the Chinese community. Some organisations had access to Language Line for service users. Others stated that currently service information leaflets are produced in English only because a need for other languages had not been identified.

### ***Dual heritage identity***

The 2001 census included for the first time ethnicity categories on dual heritage. Some organisations have identified a growing number of service users from dual heritage backgrounds, and have begun to identify the specific needs and/or experiences of those from dual heritage backgrounds. In Norton Radstock Family Centre, most of the non-white users tend to be families with dual heritage children:

“One of the issues with dual heritage children is sometimes having a white mother and/or father. The reaction of children at school to the child, and the child’s self esteem and identity can be affected. Sometimes parents of dual heritage children may not raise issues of ethnicity or see this as an issue to be addressed with the parenting of the child”

### ***Cultural sensitivity in service provision***

The Sports and Leisure Development manager was asked about whether any needs had been identified around access to some leisure activities, for example, women only swimming sessions. However, even though needs had been identified, his reply seemed to suggest that there would need to be a greater amount of interest expressed to warrant a change in current provision:

“I think there have been a couple of questions about single sex swimming. The response has been ‘yes’ we could try it if there were sufficient numbers. I think that Bath leisure centre has looked at it”.

### ***Lack of awareness of needs***

Whilst the above issues had been identified by some organisations, many people who were interviewed expressed grave doubt that they were aware of the needs of local black and ethnic minority people. There appeared to be a number of reasons for this lack of awareness.

### **Absence of systematic ethnic monitoring**

Many organisations are not systematically monitoring the ethnicity of service users. Some organisations do not monitor at all, whereas others monitor only for short periods annually. Even when systems are in place for the monitoring of service users, often this is not done because some staff feel uncomfortable about asking questions on ethnicity, or are concerned that service users will feel uncomfortable about it.

As well as providing a means of assessing the quality of the service provided to all ethnic groups, monitoring the ethnicity of service users would go some way towards identifying patterns that might indicate the wider needs of the community. The Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 places a responsibility upon public authorities to monitor ethnicity in employment outcomes. Along with this, the Act requires organisations to assess the impact of policies upon different racial groups. Therefore ethnic monitoring of service users should begin to play a key role in many of the organisations that are not currently undertaking it. For example, at the moment, GPs do not monitor the ethnicity of patients, and this is something that the B&NES Primary Care Trust's Equality Forum are looking into. A new Single Patient Electronic Record is being developed and it is expected that ethnic monitoring will be launched to coincide with that.

### **Lack of outreach work**

There appears to be very little outreach work being undertaken with black and other minority ethnic communities in the Norton Radstock area. Examples of other outreach work were encountered during the research, such as time being spent reaching out to older people and helping them to access events. However, often because of pressures of time, and the fact that there are no organised community groups in the area, little outreach work was happening within the black and other minority ethnic community. Furthermore, as was highlighted earlier, black and other minority ethnic people are tending not to participate in consultation processes and structures within organisations. Somer Housing stated:

“... traditionally, black and other minority ethnic people haven't been involved in our tenant structures. Tenants can go through the residents committee and sit on the board, but we haven't traditionally attracted black people” (Somer Housing).

Whilst some needs may have been identified in research and consultation has been done in the area, some areas of need have not been explored at all. B&NES Racial Equality Council have recently secured funding for a sports development worker to examine this particular issue locally. As the Sport and Leisure Development Manager stated:

“there is a lack of quantifiable research showing what and where the issues are in respect of sport/leisure and black and other minority ethnic people”

Over three years, the project will attempt to discover what the issues are and then undertake intervention work and capacity building to take things forward (e.g. training in football leadership etc).

### **A 'colour blind' approach**

There was some evidence that the needs of black and other minority ethnic people had at times not been identified because of a 'colour blind' approach on the part of service providers. One example of this concerned the provision of services to a child with behavioural difficulties. It was not until the child had been assessed by a black healthcare worker that the potential impact of issues relating to his ethnicity in a predominantly white environment had been raised. A white health care worker explained that until that point, she hadn't viewed him as a black child:

“ I didn't see him as being x the brown child... although I realise now that maybe some of the problems do relate to his ethnicity and his family circumstances” (Health worker)

It was clear that the person above had recognised the importance of acknowledging ethnicity through dealing with this particular case.

Other examples concerned a lack of awareness of the impact of decisions upon black and other minority ethnic families. In one case, the premature baby of an Indian family was moved to a hospital in Dorset because there were not enough beds at the RUH. The father had almost lost his job in a local business due to taking time off to take his wife and toddler to and from the hospital:

“... the services didn't appreciate the hardship on this particular family, the woman was already isolated and didn't have extended family around to help cope. She suffered very bad post natal depression because of it” (Health worker)

A further example was given within B&NES Children and families Services. Dual heritage young people are over-represented in 'looked after' services, and research that was undertaken within services for Children and Families found that care plans are developed without ethnicity issues such as religion and culture being taken into account.

### **Examples of what organisations are doing to be responsive to the needs of black and other minority ethnic communities**

When asked about the actions that were being taken to meet the needs of diverse communities, a range of different examples of action were given by organisations. These included:

- Trying to ensure that black and ethnic minority service users feel welcome (and having a follow up service to find out why people stop coming)

- Having flexibility within services so that they can be changed to fit the needs of black and ethnic minority people rather than users having to fit in with what already exists.
- Monitoring racist incidents (more on this subject follows later in this section)
- Putting up racial discrimination posters in interview rooms
- Putting up posters that challenge stereotypes
- Signing up with language line
- Making contact with the B&NES Racial Equality Council
- Attempting to raise awareness of racism in local talks etc (e.g. to PROBUS, WI etc)
- Making equality issues a priority in the selection and training of staff and volunteers
- Having a recruitment pack which positively encourages black and other minority ethnic applicants
- Attending training sessions on the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000

There were a number of examples of what organisations are doing in order to promote race equality in their work. In Avon and Somerset constabulary, schools liaison work involves discussing recent cases such as the Steven Lawrence case and the Leeds footballers. Also, case studies that are used with young people include discussion points such as “What would you do if you saw someone putting racist graffiti on locker?”

A senior manager from Somer Housing stated that Somer is a member of the Partnership on Racial Harassment and also liases with SARI in all racial harassment incidents. SARI records all incidents and even when the tenant does not wish to be referred, anonymised details are passed on to SARI.

In schools there seemed to be a lot of activity around multiculturalism within the curriculum. However, a worker from STAR (Support and Training in Anti Racism for under 8s workers) stated:

“There’s an obsession with celebrating religious festivals. STAR aims to encourage multi-cultural education to be integrated into the core of the curriculum. And instead of just looking at differences, there’s a need to look at similarities too” (STAR).

All Headteachers who were met with stated that there was an attempt to integrate multiculturalism into subjects such as history, religion, art, dance, music, drama and food. However, there seemed to be an over emphasis on international education and links with schools from overseas as a means of promoting race equality in the UK. Again the STAR worker stated that there should be more emphasis on

“...people in Britain, not people in other countries “ (STAR Worker)

The issue was raised with Headteachers about the need to stress that Britain itself is multicultural, and that this can be demonstrated to pupils by links with schools in areas with more diverse populations such as Bristol. Furthermore, in some schools there was an acknowledgement that many children were

unable to undertake overseas visits as part of the link because of the enormous expense involved.

One school had placed a lot of emphasis on the attitudes of children prior to the arrival of the first dual heritage child in the school. The children undertook and exercise at an assembly where a (pre warned) group of red haired children were berated for 'daring to come to school with red hair'. Other children in the school were appalled by this unfair attitude of the Headteacher, based on physical characteristics alone. The exercise had proved a very useful introduction to discussions around racist attitudes and behaviour.

### **Racist incidents and racial harassment**

In Part One of the report, details are given of the numbers of reported racist incidents in the Norton Radstock area between 2001 and 2002. In the course of discussions with people from organisations in the area there were further anecdotal accounts of racism within the area. One person explained that a former colleague who was black and had worked in the Norton Radstock area whilst living in Bristol had said that he would not contemplate moving to Norton Radstock because he had children and thought they would not survive in the environment.

The CAB manager drew attention to the racist attacks that had occurred in Midsomer Norton in the previous year, where a local business was attacked and a racially motivated assault had happened. His view was that there tends to be a closed mentality in the area and that whilst second generation Polish and Irish people might have been accepted into the community, others such as Muslims, had not been. In his experience, even public transport would be hard for some people to access without being verbally abused.

A Police Officer described an incident in Midsomer Norton High Street which took place approximately 2 years ago. Two Asian brothers had opened a newsagent's on the island in Midsomer Norton. One evening, a white man smashed the window (possibly by accident) and the brothers assumed it was a burglary. They brought out a machete. Meanwhile onlookers (60 or so) leaving local pubs gathered and racist abuse was chanted. The Asian brothers were arrested and charged although they were later discharged in court. Subsequently some of the white onlookers were charged with racially aggravated offences. Other examples included a family of white mother, African Caribbean father and dual heritage children having items pushed through their letterbox.

In racial harassment in housing, if the perpetrator is a Somer tenant, then action can be taken against them, which can ultimately lead to their eviction. However, a Senior manager for Somer Housing explained that most victims do not want Somer to take action against perpetrators, because their identity would be revealed. Sometimes in these cases, the victim is moved because that is what they say they want. She added:

“...a huge amount of what Somer does is negotiation. There are different degrees of racial harassment - name-calling is not

extreme harassment. I'm not saying that it is not distressing, but Somer will try to negotiate between the parties. It's not possible to deal with every case of racial harassment in the same way. We don't really want to evict people, there's a breadth of response. The Somer approach has been developed in conjunction with SARI".

One ethnic minority health worker reported racist incidents where she had been the target. On one occasion, on the telephone, she heard a patient refer to her as "that 'f...ing' foreign health visitor". At the time she did not tell colleagues about this:

"... I didn't want to make it into a big issue or draw attention to the fact that I was different... I felt that if I made a fuss about it I would draw attention to the fact that I am different and I wanted a 'quiet life'" (Health worker)

This racist incident had eventually come to light when other staff encountered problems with the same patient. The reluctance of the health worker to report the incident initially, along with the reluctance of tenants to report racial harassment, will be returned to in the next section of the report, when the reasons for not reporting racist incidents are examined.

Racist incidents had occurred in four of the schools who were contacted as part of this research. However, all four Headteachers stated that there had only been a small number of incidents in their schools. There was a general feeling within all four schools that children would feel able to report racist incidents to staff members.

One Headteacher commented that he felt there were a lot of racist attitudes under the surface, and another stated that the incidents tended to occur because children are often ignorant of the issues and therefore insensitive. Incidents had included racist graffiti, name calling and children being taunted with "go back to your own country". Examples of parental attitudes were given by the worker from STAR, who had visited schools in the area. These included a parent complaining to the school that his children were taking home books with dual language text and pictures of black people, and a family wanting to give money through the 'Samaritan's Purse' as long as it did not go to black families in Africa or asylum seekers

All schools had recording policies and in one case the Police had been involved. Within three of the schools, a lot of emphasis had been placed on the importance of dealing with racist incidents in a public way to send a clear message throughout the school:

"... these have been dealt with by a tough sanction, visible to all, plus sessions with the perpetrator alone" (Headteacher)

In one example, a local newspaper had disclosed that a year 11 pupil from a local secondary school was a member of the National Front. The current

Headteacher said that the deputy head had dealt with this very well, making a strong response on behalf of the school that racism would not be tolerated.

In another case, the discussion between the parent of the victim of the racist incident and the Headteacher had led to further disclosures of racism that the family were experiencing outside of the school. The Headteacher had been able to offer support over this.

### **Confusion over 'racist incidents'**

When discussing racist incidents with service providers there was some evidence of confusion over what actually constitutes a racist incident. In one case a youth leader gave an example of a black girl assaulting a white girl as being racist, when there was no evidence of the attack being racially motivated. Similarly, in one school, the Headteacher brought up an example of racism operating 'the other way round', where a black person had complained about the school children's behaviour outside her house. Furthermore, the same Headteacher went on to add that a black pupil tended to bully fellow white pupils: it was perceived that the racism the black girl received was partly a consequence of this.

The underpinning belief that 'black people can be racist too', even when there is no evidence of racial motivation, appeared, in some cases, to have been used as a means of slightly lessening the importance of the racial incidents upon black people. The response that racism can 'work both ways' needs to be examined and will be returned to again in the conclusions and recommendations.

### **Staffing**

Interviews with service providers tended to focus more on race equality in service delivery than race equality in employment. However, the two issues are fundamentally linked: organisations that have a workforce mirroring the diversity within the community are deemed to be much more aware and responsive to the needs of that community. Therefore, whilst this section is fairly brief, it raises some issues about organisational effectiveness.

Across the range of statutory and voluntary sector organisations that were encountered during the research, the low proportions of staff from black and other minority ethnic backgrounds was a key theme. There appeared to be particularly low numbers of black and other minority ethnic staff operating within the Norton Radstock area.

There were some examples of organisations setting targets that exceeded the proportions of black and other minority ethnic people in the community. In Somer Housing, ethnic monitoring figures showed that black and other minority ethnic people made up just two percent of the staff group. However, whilst this showed a slightly higher proportion compared to the 1991 census figures (1.6 percent of the community of B&NES being from black and other minority ethnic groups), the organisation had set targets to increase the levels in order to be in line with the targets for tenancies let to black and other minority ethnic people (which is currently 5 percent).

Other organisations were undertaking positive action measures in job advertisements, encouraging black and other minority ethnic people to apply. In one school, where the whole staff team and governing body were white, the issue of positive action measures to encourage more diversity in applications was raised. However, the response from the Headteacher was a concern that this might lead to appointments on the basis of ethnicity rather than competence. This response reveals a misapprehension of positive action measures, which may be shared by other organisations, thus preventing them from taking steps to encourage more black and other minority ethnic applicants. In the same school, a suggestion was made to co-opt a black or ethnic minority person onto the governing body, (e.g. from the Black Families Education Support Group). However, the view of the Headteacher was that an attempt to attract governors who might live outside the locality would be met with resistance by other members of the governing body.

Along with monitoring the makeup of the workforce according to ethnicity, some statutory sector organisations stated that they had begun to monitor ethnicity within other areas of employment, including grievance and disciplinary proceedings. A further concern within B&NES Council and the Primary Care Trust was to do with 'vertical segregation' (e.g. the under representation of black and other minority ethnic staff in management positions).

There were some examples of organisations attempting to meet the support needs of black and other minority ethnic staff. The B&NES Primary Care Trust had recently set up a black and other minority ethnic staff Forum, which reported staffing issues to the Equalities Group.

### ***Staff awareness levels and training needs***

In schools, two Headteachers raised the issue of the importance of race equality awareness within the staff team. One Headteacher was confident in the staff being 'alert and sensitive to the issues', whereas in another school, the staff team had recently undergone a training session which focused on their own attitudes and prejudices.

The STAR worker commented that, in her work with pre-school teachers, there is often a fear of doing or saying the wrong thing:

"Often these are people who started doing some voluntary work at their child's nursery many years ago when pre-school education was much more informal, then obtained some qualifications and eventually found themselves managing a pre-school. Language awareness is poor: people use the word 'coloured' because 'black doesn't sound very nice'"

She believed that staff are often keen to engender positive attitudes about the black and other minority ethnic children in their care, yet feel unsure about 'singling them out' for attention. Mentioning ethnicity is something that they feel uncomfortable about. Another issue highlighted within schools concerned the attitudes of support staff:

“Dinner ladies and cooks are a problem. One child eats with his fingers, and sometimes has sweetcorn with his dessert. Negative comments have been made like ‘Oh that’s what *they* do’... things like that. People you work with can have deeply embedded racist views. I’ve flagged this with staff and supervisors” (Headteacher).

This issue of the attitudes of support staff is returned to in Part Four, where a parent raised similar concerns about attitudes of support staff to her son.

The above observations on staff awareness levels indicate a need for further training. The issue of training was not raised with many organisations due to time constraints and the focus on service delivery rather than employment issues. However, some organisations highlighted training as an important tool in changing attitudes. For example, B&NES Primary Care Trust had developed an Equalities Workbook, which was being used on a team by team basis. The aim of the workbook was said to be to question attitudes and assumptions and try to change behaviour.

Organisations operating in predominantly white areas may not perceive the need for staff to undertake training on race equality issues. In education settings, the STAR worker commented that:

“... little training on race equality, especially on its relevance for all or mainly white areas, is provided for pre-school teachers and infant teachers during their initial qualification. Often any information provided is geared more to schools and pre-schools with high proportions of black and other minority ethnic pupils. For example a Nationally Qualified Teacher in an Infants school in the Norton Radstock are said she had received only half a day’s training on Equal opportunities during her teacher training”.

### **Longer term ideas**

All those who took part were keen to receive a report of the findings. A number of ideas were put forward by organisations as to how race equality issues could be better addressed in the future. A number of organisations stressed the need to build up better links with the B&NES Racial Equality Council.

The CAB suggested that it would be helpful if a more collaborative approach between agencies in providing services to the black and other minority ethnic community in Norton Radstock was developed. This could take the form of a

“... peripatetic culturally diverse service operating within a series of local agencies and venues. There’s a fragmentation of resources and approach at the moment”.

Some organisations talked about changing the services that they provided if a need was identified for this. Ideas were raised about outreach services, or about targeting services particularly at the need of black and other minority ethnic groups.

“We haven’t yet gone down the route of having a separate black and other minority ethnic family group, although do have a group for parents of disabled children. If there was a group wanting to meet then they could do” (Norton Radstock Family Centre).

The STAR worker stated that a number of Infant, Junior and Primary schools in the Norton Radstock area had highlighted the need for black role models (such as accountants, health professionals etc) to visit their schools. These could help present a positive image within communities where there are few black and other minority ethnic people.

### **Summary and conclusions**

This part of the report has given an overview of the issues that arose in relation to race equality with a range of service provider organisations in the Norton Radstock area. Discussions focussed on policy statements and the impact of the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000, along with levels of awareness of the needs of the local black and other minority ethnic population. The findings in this section of the report have not highlighted many complacent attitudes towards race equality. Indeed, many service provider organisations expressed an awareness of the impact that isolation and rural racism could have upon members of the community. However, although some organisations had begun to identify specific needs (such as health, discrimination, language provision etc) many believed their services to be underused by members of the black and other minority ethnic community, and little outreach work had been done to find out why this was the case.

Specific problems highlighted within this section have included a lack of systematic monitoring of service users, insufficient outreach work to build up links and identify needs, and, at times, a ‘colour blind’ approach in the provision of services to people who may have very different cultural needs. Further issues concern staffing, with many organisations having disproportionately low numbers of black and other minority ethnic staff (who also tend to be vertically segregated in lower level employment), and the difficulties with staff attitudes towards race equality issues.

In Part Four of the report which follows, a number of these issues are addressed from the point of view of the black and other minority ethnic people who took part in the research. They are then returned to in Part Five, Conclusions and Recommendations.

**Part Four: Research findings: experiences of black and other minority ethnic people in the Norton Radstock area.**

**Introduction and overview**

This section of the report describes the findings from the interviews that were carried out during October and November 2002 with 35 black and other minority ethnic people in the Norton Radstock area. Details of the ways in which interviewees were accessed, along with the range of topics that were covered during the interviews have already been outlined in Part Two of the report. Therefore, this section will present the findings in terms of the sample breakdown, and then in terms of the experiences of living (or working) in the Norton Radstock area.

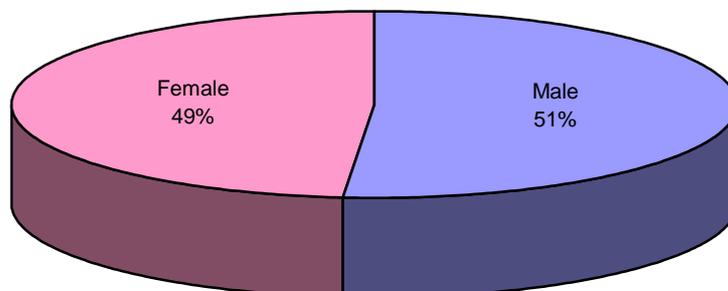
At times during the research, interviewees raised specific concerns about particular organisations (individual schools, shops, and so on). It should be noted that the PRIDE steering group will be raising these concerns with the individual organisations in question.

**The sample**

Overall, as has already been stated, a sample of 35 might be viewed as a rather small number to interview in order to get a picture of life for people from black and other minority ethnic backgrounds within Norton Radstock. However, if the black and other minority ethnic population has doubled since the 1991 Census, then 35 people account for more than 10 percent of the black and other minority ethnic population. Furthermore, many of those that were interviewed were part of larger family groups, and spoke about not only their own experiences but also those of their children, their siblings, their parents and carers. Therefore, the views expressed by 35 people represent the experiences of over 100 people, most of whom are from black and other minority ethnic groups who are currently resident in the Norton Radstock area.

**Gender**

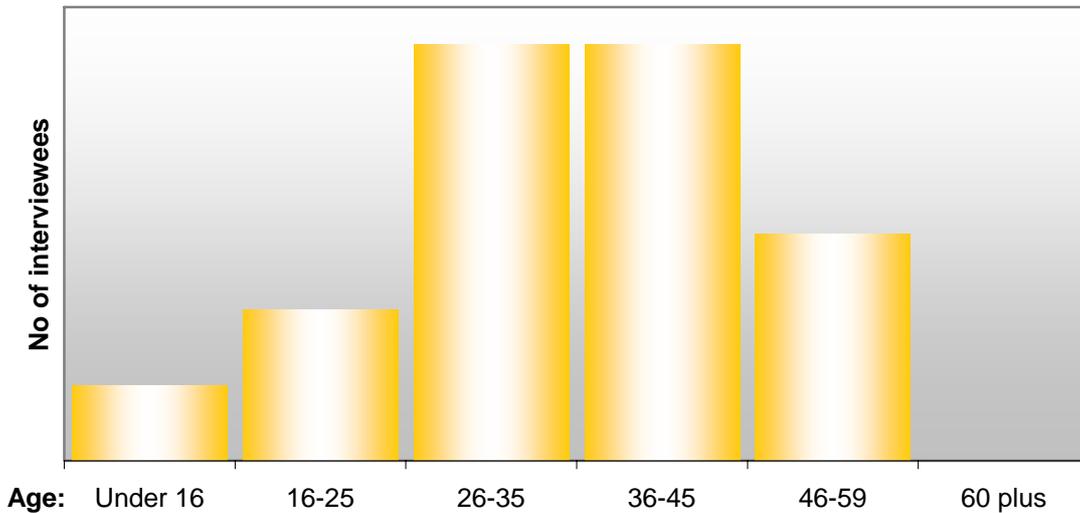
The sample was well balanced in terms of gender, with 18 interviewees being male, and 17 female



*Table 1: Gender breakdown of the sample*

**Age**

The age range of interviewees is detailed below in *Table 2*

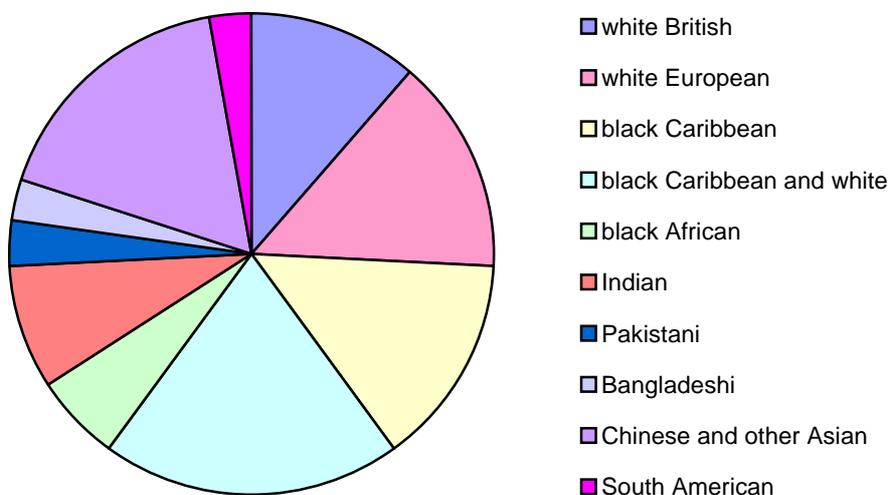


*Table 2: Age breakdown of the sample*

It can be seen that the majority of the sample was drawn from the two mid-age categories, representing ages 26 – 45. Unfortunately, no one in the age 60 plus category was interviewed. However, this may be due to what appears to be a disproportionately young population of black and other minority ethnic people in the area, which the 2001 census will be able to either confirm or deny. Whilst only two people under the age of 16 took part, the experiences of young people were expressed through interviews with the many parents within the sample, who between them had more than 50 children.

**Ethnicity**

Each interviewee was asked to identify their own ethnic grouping, from a list taken from the 2001 Census categories. Table 3 below shows the range of ethnic groups within the sample.



*Table 3: Ethnic breakdown of the sample*

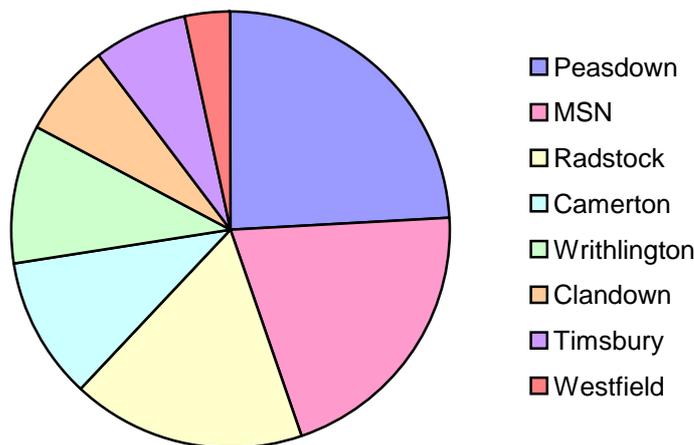
It can be seen that the sample of interviewees came from a range of ethnic backgrounds. A number of white British people were interviewed. Some of these represented white parents of dual heritage children and/or white partners of black or other minority ethnic people. The sample also included white Europeans, some of whom felt they had experienced racism on account of their ethnic origin, whilst others felt they were viewed as 'outsiders' within the community.

Just under a quarter of the sample came from dual heritage backgrounds. The most common dual heritage background within the sample was African Caribbean and white, and seven interviewees identified themselves as such.

The sample from Asian backgrounds included Pakistani, Indian and Bangladeshi. The Chinese and other Asian category included those who described their ethnic background as Chinese, Filipino, Arab and Iranian.

### **Place of residence**

Table 4 below details the places of residence of the interviewees in the sample.



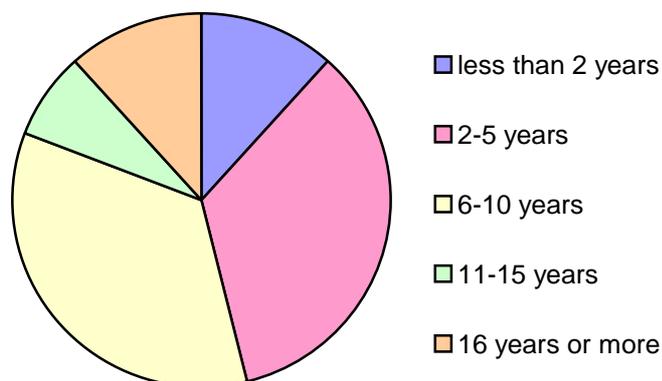
*Table 4: Places of residence within the Norton Radstock area*

As was explained in Section Two of the report, it was decided to interview people who lived outside of the geographical boundaries of the Norton Radstock area, such as Peasdown St John. This was because it was felt that people resident just outside the Norton Radstock area would still use the services and facilities of the area and may also send children to schools within the area.

It can be seen that the majority of interviewees resided in Peasdown St John, Midsomer Norton and Radstock, whilst the remainder of the sample lived in the outlying villages. A further five interviewees worked within the area but lived elsewhere (e.g. Bristol or Bath).

### **Length of residence**

All interviewees were asked how long they had lived in the area. Table 5 gives details of this.



*Table 5: Length of residence in the area*

In Part One of the report, it is estimated that the black and other minority ethnic population of the area would have grown since the 1991 Census. When the 2001 census figures are available, this may prove to be the case as it can be seen from *Table 5* that approximately half of the sample had moved to the Norton Radstock area in the past 6 years, and only 5 interviewees had lived in the area for more than 10 years.

### **Reasons for moving to the area**

Where appropriate, interviewees were asked to state the reasons behind their move to the area. The most common reason for moving to the area was to do with taking up employment, and nine interviewees gave this as their reason for moving to the area.

The second most common reason for moving to the area was to do with housing options. Seven people mentioned housing as being their main reason for moving to the area, with three of whom stating that house prices were much cheaper in the area compared with Bath. Others had taken up the offer of Local Authority housing in the area. One person who was living in Peasdown St John said that she had been warned by friends that the area might be 'a bit rough', but she had assumed she would cope, having lived in similar working class communities in the north. However, the level of racism had come as a shock and she felt that it would have been helpful if Somer Housing had raised this potential problem with her in discussion before she took up the tenancy.

Four people stated that the reason behind their move to the area was to join members of their family.

### **Extended family in the area**

Very few of those interviewed had any members of their extended family living in the area. One Chinese interviewee said that her five-year-old daughter asks everyone she meets who has dark hair if they are Chinese, because she has

no Chinese family members in the area. Only seven interviewees stated that they had family such as parents, in laws and siblings in the area.

### **Experiences of living in the Norton Radstock area.**

As a means of opening up discussion, all interviewees were asked to talk about their overall experiences of living in the Norton Radstock area. The main aim of this question was to highlight positive experiences, and also to raise issues of isolation that could then be drawn out in subsequent questions. A number of interviewees said initially that they had not much to say, having suffered very little racism. However, as the interview progressed, they began to reassess things that had happened to them. The more time that was spent with people, the more open they became and often the final comments conflicted with their initial 'no problems' responses.

### ***Positive experiences***

A minority of interviewees (five) stated that their experiences of living or working in the area were positive. One person stated:

"I have never felt alien... I don't feel like a foreigner, I feel I belong, I don't feel isolated. Maybe because of my religion being Christian, going to church I have met more people locally. If I was another religion maybe things would be different. Initially it was a bit scary moving here as I have experienced racism in other areas but never here".

However, as explained above, there was a tendency for people to begin by stressing the positive and then, on reflection, to say that they had encountered racist attitudes or abuse. For example, one person with a takeaway business in the area said:

"... I like living in the area, there's no real racism... more like general abuse from youths and drunks"

Those who were positive tended to stress the benefits of living in a rural setting, which included 'peace and quiet' and living in a small community where they knew most people.

### ***Isolation***

A number of interviewees said that they felt isolated in the area, and did not feel part of the community. One woman who had moved to the area five years ago to take up a job stated that she didn't socialise much with work colleagues:

"There is isolation though, no doubt about it. I study a lot and enjoy my husband's company"

Another interviewee expressed concern about his wife, as he often goes away on business:

“... my wife would say she was very isolated. Sometimes I go away for a few days and my wife stays in the flat... she doesn't even answer the door, because of the drug dealers nearby...”

The following comments are typical of the experiences of a number of interviewees, who felt that they didn't belong in the area:

“I feel very lonely. People are really ignorant, though some are friendly. I feel in a minority. I would like to move to London where I have more family”.

“... people were not welcoming when I first came. In our home area we are still regarded as different. People joke about little things, them and us. I definitely feel isolated”.

Some interviewees said that it was hard to break into the community because many local residents were already living within the circles of their extended families and seemed to have no need for new friends. Furthermore, having no car and relying upon public transport (an experience shared across ethnic groups within rural areas) had an adverse impact upon interviewees who already felt isolated because of their ethnicity.

### ***'Fitting in'***

Some interviewees stressed that they had made every effort to 'fit in' within their communities as a way of coping with the loneliness and isolation. However, this had been far from easy for most:

“It took me a lot longer to fit in around here than anyone else. I've had to work hard to prove to people that me and my son are worthwhile to get to know. I feel isolated, but I'm getting there now”

This idea of having to 'work hard' in order to be accepted within the community was shared by many others:

“I have had to *make* myself accepted”.

“I don't isolate myself – if you do it's much worse. I make friends easily and make an effort to mix in... people seemed scared of mixing with people of a different colour”

“I have no problems socialising. It's just ignorance. If you blend in and talk with people they accept you”

“I'm an outgoing person: life around here is what you make it”

” I was adopted by a white family. Anyone can adapt to a culture so it's been very positive”.

However, attempting to 'blend in' and making efforts to be accepted did not always result in a sense of belonging.

### **Standing out and being stared at**

Most interviewees stated that they were conscious of standing out in the community as being visibly different. Many people talked about being stared at when they were out. For some this fear of 'standing out' and being stared at had been especially hard when they first moved to the area. One young person commented:

"To start with I was worried what people would think about how I looked because I am black and most other people are white... but there are more black people here now than when we first moved here. At my new school no one wanted to play with me at first they only stared... but I don't feel I'm different anymore because I know so many people. People are always saying nice things about my hair, saying she's pretty..."

Another interviewee commented that initial reactions to him were based upon his difference, but that life was easier since he had made friends:

"At first people were unaware of Asian looks, there were stares. But now I have many friends here. I did work in Devon for 3 years and experienced much more racism there. But none here, not to my face. I'm a big guy so people don't do it to my face".

Some interviewees did not feel that life had become easier since they moved to the area:

"I have always felt in a minority due to high white population in the area. I feel more comfortable in the company of other black people".

For those working in the area there was a sense of being able to escape from the looks and stares at the end of the day when returning home:

"I don't see a lot of black people in the area. It's a job - you do the job and go home. I do get looked at and stared at especially by parents and children in a rural area".

Other people working in the area seemed to take negative reactions to them as part and parcel of the job:

"I am working in the area. The previous manager warned me of negative reactions. It doesn't bother me - people who judge colour must be shallow. I've always been in a minority".

### **Racist remarks and assumptions**

During this opening question, many interviewees began to talk about racist remarks and assumptions they had encountered. Some described being on the receiving end of 'sly comments and verbal abuse', and of 'silly remarks from the kids'. Others described the assumptions that had been made about them. One mother of a dual heritage child explained:

“I have dark features and my first son was blonde with blue eyes. People used to ask ‘are you the au pair?’”

Similarly a (white) mother of a dual heritage child explained that local people often assume that her son is adopted, especially when they see her with the white baby she childminds. Another interviewee, who was white British said:

“I feel as if I walk anywhere with my wife people give me the eye... and there is an assumption that because my wife is Asian she must have been bought”.

One dual heritage woman was exasperated with the fact that people in the local community only began to put down their barriers when they realised she had a white partner.

“When they saw me with my partner it was almost as if they began to accept me - he’s white British”

### ***Impact upon identity***

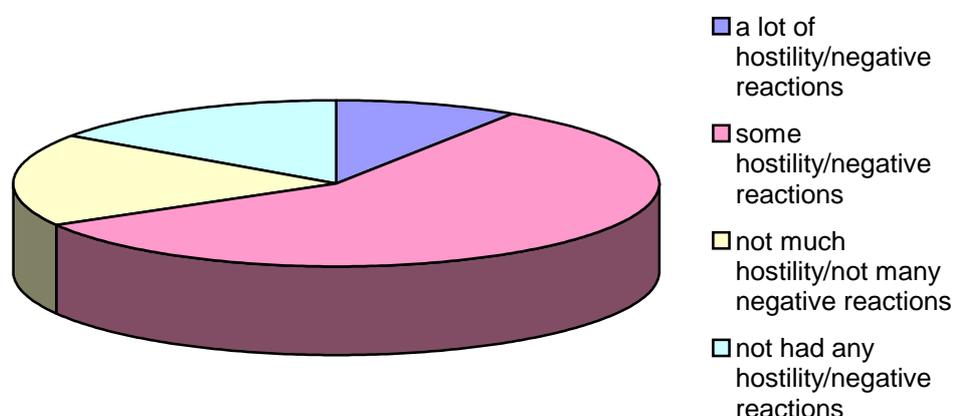
These experiences of isolation, of standing out and of trying to simply ‘blend in’ within the local community had taken their toll on some interviewees. It became clear that in some cases, there had been a negative impact upon interviewees self image and identity. As one person put it:

“I have never felt part of the community, I’ve always felt that I was different. I feel it has made me deny that I am mixed race”

This issue of self-identity will be returned to in Section Five of the report.

### **Experiences of hostility, negative attitudes and reactions.**

Following on from the opening question about experiences of living or working in the area, the next set of questions attempted to gauge the frequency and level of hostility experienced by interviewees. Interviewees were asked to rate the level of hostility they had received on a scale from ‘a lot’ to ‘none’. *Table 6* below displays the results



*Table 6: Levels of hostility*

It can be seen that more than half of the sample of interviewees stated that they had been on the receiving end of some hostility or negative reactions within the Norton Radstock area, with a further three people stating that this had amounted to a lot of hostility. At the other end of the scale, five people reported experiencing no hostility or negative reactions whatsoever in the area. Two of these were white European, who stated that they felt local people did not perceive them as being 'different'.

Those who felt they had encountered a lot of hostility in the area described what at times, amounts to a daily experience:

"I haven't received a very good welcome from banks and clientele. They look at you different. People said they wouldn't use the shop because I'm black... there are a lot of people who are hostile. I feel this is because of my ethnicity. You can tell they are thinking it, they don't say it direct but the things they say and the way they say it, you can tell"

"I have had a lot of hostility in the past at school and guide camp. It happened on a daily basis at one school".

One person who had only recently moved to the area said that she predicted the level of hostility to go up in the future rather than down.

Of those who stated that they had not encountered any hostility, one Muslim interviewee went on to add that he had begun to pick up on anti – Islamic feelings and reactions within the community:

"I've not encountered any hostility... but it's the religion part that is starting to come up. A lot of people have limited knowledge about Islam. They make assumptions that Muslims are something dangerous - especially Arab Muslims".

He went on to express fears that young Muslims may be provoked into a backlash against these negative attitudes, which could bubble up and result in violence. He stressed the need for Islam to be explained in more depth, and that media reporting of Islamic law tended to emphasise aspects of the faith out of context, which served to scare non-Muslims and perpetuate negative attitudes. He suggested that people from different religions should be provided with opportunities to talk to each other more openly.

A number of interviewees stated that they had encountered hostility initially upon moving to the area, but that this had lessened with time:

"... when I first moved here there was a lot of hostility, especially towards the children. Now after living here for some time, I still feel it, but most people have accepted us... I wouldn't say that we feel part of the community though".

Another person stated that she:

“... had a fair bit to start with... but there are only a few adults now that make me feel worried because of their reactions to x (her son)”.

From the above two comments it can be seen that even though the initial negative reactions and hostility had diminished with time, this did not mean that interviewees felt totally accepted within their communities.

The next section goes on to detail examples of racist incidents interviewees had encountered within schools, their local neighbourhoods, at work and during leisure time.

### **Racism within schools**

This section details the experiences of interviewees and their children who attend schools in the Norton Radstock area. Accounts of direct racism, ranging from racist attacks to name calling, are outlined first. Next, examples are given of interviewees' perceptions of indirect racism, whereby a white child might have been treated differently in the same circumstances. This is followed by issues raised in connection with the school curriculum, which details both negative experiences and positive examples of good practice.

#### ***Racist incidents***

Interviewees describe recent events and things that had happened in the past that they still felt upset and angry about. The most serious racial assault raised during this research concerned an incident that had happened at a Secondary School within the Norton Radstock area 18 months ago. A mother described how a boy had called her daughter (who was 14 at the time) racist names, and had then urinated over her. The interviewee said that she had reported this to the Headteacher, and also to SARI. The Headteacher had brought in the Police, and the boy was expelled from the school within one week. She went on to add that the boy came from a neighbouring family, and that Somer Housing had also been involved which had resulted in the boy and his family being moved elsewhere.

Whilst on the above occasion the incident had been dealt with to the satisfaction of the interviewee, a more recent event had not been handled so well. The interviewee described a situation where her daughter had been subject to racist name-calling, which had resulted in a fight with girls from the school. The Headteacher had suspended her daughter whilst the other girls were dealt with. The interviewee, who had again involved SARI, was unhappy about her daughter being suspended, especially as she had received no letter giving the reasons. She had simply been told that her daughter was suspended “while we are dealing with the problem”. She stated that she believed there to be ‘silent racism’ within the school and added:

“The school – I support it but it’s not doing its job. I feel it will slip up sooner or later”.

Another interviewee described an incident that had happened 10 years ago when her daughter was 10 years old. On a school trip to a local attraction, her

daughter was picked out in front of her classmates and a comment was made by one of the staff members at the attraction to the effect that it would not be possible to tell if she had washed her hands because of her skin colour:

“... the children found this very funny ... it was very upsetting for my daughter and ruined the trip. I still feel very upset and angry that my daughter was put in that situation”.

### **Name-calling**

Some interviewees described recent examples of racist name-calling within schools. Others went back some years in describing their experiences within local schools and the impact it had upon them.

Recent examples of name-calling within schools involved terms such as ‘nigger’, ‘paki’, ‘chinky’, ‘chocolate doughnut’ and ‘poo face’. One girl had been repeatedly asked by two boys in her school if she was in the ‘brownies’. This had upset her and her parents reported it to the Headteacher who dealt with it as a racist incident. Not all Headteachers had dealt with name calling to the satisfaction of interviewees though. A young person described her experiences at her old primary school:

“At my old primary school, when I was seven or eight, some older children, about five or six of them (...) would call me names when I was out to play on the school field – never on the playground as the teachers were there. There were never any grown ups around when it happened. Every playtime they would walk past me and call me names – ‘chocolate doughnut’, ‘poo face’. It made me feel upset and angry. I didn’t tell anybody but some friends knew as they had heard it happen sometimes. Eventually I told my mum after it had happened for months, and she and my dad went to see the Headteacher. Then they moved me to a different school because the head wouldn’t listen. I’m still wary that it will happen again at (new) school but I know how to handle it now”.

Other interviewees spoke about their own painful memories of going to school in the area. One woman in her early 30s described being called ‘golliwog, blackie, sambo, fuzzy wog and nigger’. One young man recalled his schooldays a few years previously with clarity:

“My memories that have always stuck are being at school and the children always laughing at my hair touching it, saying it was like I had straw growing out of my head. My nick name as a child was ‘wogga’. Some children would run behind me saying ‘wogga wogga wogga. Others would say ‘wogga come here’ (...) I remember talking to my (white) mum and she said ‘it’s just a nick-name, lots of people have nick-names’... I was never anyone’s best friend just second or third... I never had anyone to relate to”.

The above comment may well describe events that happened some years ago, but what became clear during the research is the negative impact this can still

have on an individual's identity. Furthermore, whilst interviewees described the current response of some Headteachers to be swift and authoritative in handling racist incidents, there were examples of other Headteachers and schools not handling racist incidents satisfactorily. Whereas some parents may well be 'on the case' of racist incidents that affect their children, other parents may be unaware or lack the resources to 'vote with their feet' and move their children to a school that is more committed to challenging racism and promoting race equality. The issue of the response of schools to racist incidents, and issues about self-identity will be returned to in Part 5 of the report.

Apart from direct racist incidents and name-calling, other incidents were described whereby assumptions had been made about black and other minority ethnic children not being British. One interviewee described being constantly asked by other children where she came from:

"I find that funny and say 'I'm from Bath'. Sometimes they've asked me 'what's it like over there? I've always wanted to go there', presuming I'm from Africa, and I say 'oh, you've always wanted to go to Bath have you?'"

In another school, staff had on one occasion released a minority ethnic child who was six years old to a taxi driver, without the permission of his parents. When the parents complained about this, they felt that the response of the school was to lay blame with them in that they sometimes used taxis to pick up their children (although the mother had always accompanied them). They felt that the school had sometimes used their ethnicity as a way of detracting from their genuine complaints, by stating 'over here, we do things like this'. They also felt that they had not been given enough time to express their complaints fully, as English is a second language for the mother.

On a theme of language, one college student said that his tutor had been patronising in assuming his level of understanding of English was very low.

"At college I feel insulted because tutor keeps asking me if I understand simple words... they make assumptions"

Another interviewee described the process of becoming a school governor within her child's school. As English is not her first language, she had found it very difficult to write a piece about herself which was no more than 50 words. However, it transpired that other candidates had gone slightly over the limit, which she and her husband raised as being unfair. The Headteacher had publicised their complaint in a newsletter to parents, and then taken it upon herself to shorten the pieces that were over the limit. The interviewee felt that she and her husband had been portrayed as troublemakers, which resulted in the interviewee not being elected.

One interviewee described the time when he went to collect his niece from school for the first time. Even though this had been pre-arranged, he felt he was viewed suspiciously on account of being black and was questioned more

than was necessary by the teacher, who initially would not let the child go with the interviewee even though it was obvious who he was.

### ***Treatment of black children compared to white children***

Some interviewees raised concerns that schools were responding to their children on the basis of their ethnicity, leading them to wonder on occasions if their children would have been treated differently if they were white. One interviewee said that he was concerned about:

“... the teaching of my children in school, whether they are getting the same educational needs as their white counterparts or is there an assumption that they just can't do the work – they don't seem to be encouraged or pushed as hard”

One parent described the treatment of her son who has behavioural difficulties. Her son had been the only non-white child in the school and, after a mere 6 weeks there, had been excluded. She stated:

“The school did try hard but in my opinion, the techniques they used might not have been used with a white child”

The mother felt that one of the problems was that his behaviour had been viewed as almost integral to his ethnicity instead of him being seen as a small child with behaviour problems. She described how the school, in attempting to deal with his behaviour, had gradually isolated him from the rest of the children:

“... they put him with an LSA (*Learning Support Assistant*). This was in the foyer of the school with windows looking in from the two classrooms. He ran away from the main entrance when he'd had enough. They had to contain him, so they put him in a small box room that wasn't a classroom. They said he wasn't capable of integrating with the other children. To me it was all like being 'caged' (...) at morning break he didn't have playtimes with the others and the whole school could see him playing in the inner courtyard on his own. It was painful to see my child being treated like that”

She described how unhappy her child had been during this time (wetting the bed and crying himself to sleep). Another issue that she raised was that some of the playtime staff in the school were her neighbours, from whom she had received racist abuse. This had made her wonder whether they had had any say in her child not being allowed to have playtime with the other children. The behaviour and attitudes of playtime and schools meals staff has been raised as an issue in Part Three of this report, and will be returned to in Part Five, conclusions and recommendations.

The child in question had been schooled at home for a time. Fortunately, he had been seen by a black Educational Psychologist, who was the first professional in contact with the family to raise issues about the child's identity and the impact this might be having on his behaviour. Following this, the child

had a black social worker assigned to him, and is now back now in a different school with children from a more diverse range of ethnicities. He is settling in and making good progress in both his work and behaviour.

This particular case raises several issues. On the one hand, there are the concerns raised by the parent as to whether the school would have treated her child differently if he were white: namely that the methods used by the school might, in her opinion, have been viewed as too harsh in the treatment of a white child. Secondly, at the other extreme, it appeared that the school had adopted a 'colour blind' approach in responding to the child. Issues about the impact upon his dual heritage identity of being in a totally white environment had not been raised until a black professional came into contact with him. This issue of 'colour blindness' which was raised by another parent who said she felt her school had at times dealt with issues of racial harassment as bullying, and had attempted to 'beat my children back into Englishness', will be returned to in Part Five of the report.

### ***The school curriculum and ethos***

Several interviewees felt that the school curriculum did not value their child's culture, or other black and minority ethnic cultures. One interviewee, who was also a Governor for a time within the school, described how opportunities for multi-cultural education had not been taken up:

"North East Somerset Arts approached the school to come in to do free African drumming sessions with the children but were given a rude brush off by the school Headteacher".

Other interviewees mentioned problems with the Christian ethos within their school. Whilst some said that the school had not publicised the fact that they had the option of withdrawing their children from Christian assembly, one interviewee described being put under pressure to not withdraw his daughter from assembly:

"At school, we didn't want x going to the Christian assembly. But her teacher seemed to get a bit frustrated with us, and said 'in this country we have a *general* religious education' ... so we decided not to take our daughter out of assembly"

Still on the theme of the difficulties within schools with a Christian ethos, one interviewee said that their school did not 'allow for our children to attend our religious festivals'.

### **Cultural differences and needs**

Interviewees mentioned practical considerations that schools could take to ensure that difficulties did not arise for black and other minority ethnic children and their parents. One example of this concerned a pre school, where the interviewee had asked if it was possible for her daughter to wear a hat during sand play, because of the difficulty in getting sand out of afro braids. She had also suggested that all children were given hats to wear so that her daughter was not singled out. Although the pre school staff were sympathetic to this

request, the interviewee said she would like to see this practical measure become a routine procedure so that parents do not have to ask for changes to be made.

Two interviewees mentioned difficulties in respect of the 'Mongolian blue spot' which is present on the skin of children of African and African Caribbean descent. In one nursery, staff had enquired of the interviewee whether this mark was bruising. If school and nursery staff are unaware of Mongolian blue spot, they may begin to make assumptions that the mark is an indication of child abuse.

### ***Positive experiences***

Interviewees raised few positive experiences of schooling in the area. One parent talked of how happy her dual heritage daughter was at school, and that the other children 'adored' her.

Three interviewees felt that the schools their children attended had made efforts to value their culture. One parent said that at school they had explained to her son's class about the country he came from. Another parent talked about the different cultural displays that were a feature of her child's pre school.

One interviewee said that her daughter had given the number for eight in her home language, when looking at an octagon in class. The teacher had encouraged her to count to 10 in her home language, and then write it down for the class to see. The interviewee felt pleased that the teacher had 'used this to encourage and value what she knew'.

The above comments highlight the positive benefits for children and their families of their language and culture being valued, and the curriculum and displays being relevant to diverse backgrounds. One young interviewee commented about how good she felt that aspects of her own culture were included in sessions by her guide teacher, and that 'an evening on hair and makeup included how to look after my hair'. Although this had not happened in a school context, it illustrates a positive example of inclusion.

### **Racism at home**

Interviewees were asked to give examples of racist incidents they had experienced within their local communities and neighbourhoods. This section gives details of these examples and concludes with a section describing the actions that interviewees had taken to address problems.

### ***Racism in the family***

For those experiencing racism, the family is usually the haven where safety, comfort and a sense of belonging are to be found. It was therefore disturbing to find that seven interviewees had experienced racist comments and abuse from within their (white) extended families. These are some of their experiences:

“(having white adoptive parents) I was the only black child growing up (...) I’ve never felt like I was part of a black community. Members of the family would say things when we were watching sport like ‘look at those jungle bunnies run!’ If I said anything they’d say ‘you’re different, you’re one of us’.

“I heard that when we were little if mum took us out in the pram she would cover us up so people couldn’t see into the pram to comment on our appearance”

“...when I was pregnant with my daughter, my partner said ‘if it comes out black I’ll disown it and you’.

“I was told my dad referred to me as a gorilla when I was born. He asked the midwife if they produced chimpanzees not babies”

“Mum never really acknowledged that we were ‘quarter caste’ and I want to find my family (on fathers side) in Jamaica, but my mums family and brother and sister can’t understand why. I feel racially isolated from my family... the comments they make, like my mum will say: ‘you’re not listening to wog music are you?’”

“As I was growing up, I experienced racism when I had black boyfriends from out of the area – I was called a ‘coon lover’... My mum said ‘what do you want to hang around with them for?’”

Along with these many hurtful comments and remarks, other interviewees talked about the assumptions that some of their white relatives made about them and their background. One black African interviewee said that his sister’s white boyfriend had upset him by suggesting that they send a photograph of their Christmas lunch to his father in Africa. The underlying assumption was that his family in Africa would never have seen so much food on one table. The interviewee said that the media were partly to blame for not tending to show positive images of Africa, only famine and drought.

The attitudes of white family members had in some cases had a very negative impact upon interviewees self esteem and identity. This seemed to be particularly the case for black and other minority ethnic people who had grown up in a totally white environment, where racist name-calling and abuse had been excused with the comment ‘you’re different, you’re one of us’.

### ***Racism in the neighbourhood***

Many examples of racist name-calling were given by interviewees. This racist name-calling was undertaken by both children and adults in the local neighbourhood, and included ‘chocolate drop’, ‘coconut’ ‘darkie’, ‘paki’, ‘nigger’, and ‘chinky’. One boy had repeatedly been asked if he ate chocolate biscuits to ‘top up his colour’.

Where children had been the perpetrators, some interviewees described their attempts to talk to the parents in an effort to stop it from happening. Two interviewees stated that they had been able to talk it through with many

parents. One described the embarrassment of two teenage boys (who had been mimicking her and her daughter's accent and calling them 'chinky') when she raised the issue with them in front of their parents. However, dealing direct with parents had not been a successful strategy for others:

"... the mother said 'well, you are Pakis' and couldn't understand what was offensive about the situation"

After dealing with one racist neighbour, the above interviewee went on to describe how:

"... later the mother of the other children arrived, and accused me of swearing at the children. She wouldn't listen to my side of the story, called me a 'nigger' and said 'go back where you came from'".

One interviewee stated that neighbours she had received racist abuse from had now told their children to stay away from her own child and therefore the problem was generally avoided.

Other examples concerned being shouted at from a passing vehicle:

"A car load of lads passed me in daylight – close to me – driving past with the music loud, shouting and gesticulating at me. It put me on guard for a few days afterwards, made me wary"

One interviewee described how his German mother, who lives in sheltered housing is often asked by other residents: 'how many of our husbands/fathers did your husband kill?'

Along with direct racist abuse, more examples of being stared at due to visible differences were raised in this section. Many interviewees expressed a general feeling of not being accepted within their local neighbourhoods:

"I stand out as somebody who is from the outside. I feel that even though people don't know me by name they label me as 'the foreign lady in the corner house'".

"When I first moved in nobody would smile and say hello. I felt as if a million eyes were looking. It's only now after being in this house for 2 years that only some people will say hello with a little smile".

"I get strange looks... when I see people looking at me, I look at them and then they look away".

"There's a middle-aged man who comes out of his house if he sees you, then he just stands in his small front garden and stares at you until you get in your car and drive off. I always smile but he never smiles back, just looks at me as if I shouldn't be here... I feel uncomfortable with it".

Other interviewees talked about the assumptions they felt their neighbours made about them:

“We don’t socialise very much here. People always presume because my wife is Filipino that she wants to meet other Filipinos”

“There’s an old lady who presumed I was the Doctor’s wife because of my colour, and because she knows the Doctor’s wife is foreign, and I’m the only foreign looking person she has seen”

However, there were some positive views of local neighbourhoods and one woman remarked that she found it easier living in Norton Radstock than Easton in Bristol, where she had been labelled ‘brown girl’ and criticised in salons for not oiling her hair or knowing about black makeup.

### ***Coping strategies***

Interviewees had developed a variety of coping strategies to deal with racist abuse in their neighbourhoods. One interviewee had involved SARI (Support Against Racist Incidents) and the police, and her racist neighbours had been moved by Somer Housing. Her view was:

“... once people see action taken towards racism, they will back off as they know we will deal with it through the agencies, through SARI and the Police. I used to deal with it myself, but it feels much better using the police. People have weapons... SARI and the Police are ours”.

The majority of interviewees did not favour this approach. One interviewee said:

“I haven’t taken it to that stage. I like to fight my own battles and not bring in authority... I think that might make it worse. Here, you have to gain respect by being strong, by giving people the message - I’m not going to move out, I’m not going to be messed with”.

‘Toughing it out’ and talking things through had begun to work for her, and she estimated that she had gained the support of 80 percent of her neighbours through this strategy. The 20 percent of ‘hostile’ neighbours had backed off due to this overwhelming support.

Several interviewees stated that they try to simply ignore racist remarks and behaviour.

“I ignore it: I see it as an everyday part of relationships with other friends.”

“I live on my own and deal with it – I don’t discuss problems.”

At times, others had resorted to emphasising their physical strength and power as a means of deterring racist abuse. Several interviewees stated that they thought their 'size and colour' had deterred people from making comments. One person stated:

"The neighbours? - they wouldn't dare! I lived with my brother and worked out a lot – we had two Rottweilers as well!"

"I'm well known, people would know how I would react if they did."

"Even though I'm not in touch with his father I say to people 'he has a very black dad and uncles.'"

"I would assume that because of my age and stature, being tall and big built, that people are unlikely to do it to my face any more."

Some had resorted to physical means as a way of getting their message across:

"Eventually I grabbed him by the scruff of the neck and told him 'only stupid people do this!'"

At times it appeared that interviewees were having to adopt an outwardly aggressive stance, which was in conflict with their values and personality, in order to be able to cope with racism and the threat of racism.

### ***Police involvement***

As can be seen from the above, very few people sought help from the Police or other agencies. There was a general reluctance by some to use 'authority' to sort things out, as this brought with it a fear that things would only get worse. However, some thought that the Police would be of no help:

"I've never reported it to the Police as they never take action. I think they deal with Midsomer Norton, but not with the outlying communities... so I deal with it myself".

Another interviewee said that she hadn't involved the police because:

"... firstly, it would be obvious I had made the complaint and second, they don't come until the next day. I just don't like police involvement".

These views and attitudes on the involvement of the Police and other agencies are in stark contrast to the views expressed by one interviewee at the beginning of the section, who said that the Police and SARI were her 'weapons' in dealing with racism. What is apparent is that many racist incidents are going unreported due to the fact that black and other minority ethnic people feel that the Police will not be able to solve problems, and their involvement might even make things worse in the long run. This issue will be returned to in Section 5 of the report, Conclusions and Recommendations.

## **Racism at work**

Where appropriate, interviewees were asked to give examples of racism they had encountered at work. The findings that follow have been split into two sections. Firstly, examples of racism perpetrated by service users and customers are given. This is followed by examples of racist attitudes, behaviour and practices by employers.

### ***Racism from service users/customers***

A number of interviewees ran businesses in the area, such as food takeaways and shops. Many of these had received direct racial abuse from customers, and also felt that there were often underlying racist assumptions and attitudes:

“People don’t say it to your face but you can tell exactly what they mean by what they say, like “if you haven’t got any milk you’d better shut up your shop’. And if a black person comes into the shop they say ‘it’s one of your lot out here’, meaning a ‘darkie’”.

Some interviewees were reluctant to accept that the abuse they received from customers was racist, preferring instead to attribute it to:

“... too much drink. The hassle and verbal abuse we get is from bored teenagers. It’s not necessarily racist, more like too much drink or drugs”.

One customer in a takeaway shop had been complaining to the white staff about the Chinese family who had started to run another local takeaway. Using racist language, he said that he thought foreigners were ‘taking over’. He had not realised that the interviewee who ran the takeaway he was in was also Chinese, until he came out of the kitchen:

“He was very embarrassed – just took the food and ran! He still buys from here though” .

Other examples of direct racist abuse included health professionals. One interviewee had telephoned one of her patients and heard her husband shout ‘it’s that f-ing foreign (*occupation*) on the phone”. She said that she hadn’t told her colleagues about this incident as she didn’t want to make a ‘fuss’ or draw attention to the fact that she was different. The issue had eventually been brought to light when several white colleagues had encountered difficulties with the same man, and she then felt able to describe her own experiences. Another interviewee said that when she worked in a nursing home one of the patients had referred to her as a ‘slitty-eyed Asian’.

Some interviewees had encountered surprise from customers and service users, who had not expected to see a black or minority ethnic person in the job. One interviewee described how a customer and colleague had attributed the upset of the customer’s daughter to him being black:

“They felt that I had made her cry because I was big built and black. One of them said ‘she’s probably frightened because she’s not seen a black man before’” .

In another case, National Front leaflets had been put through the workplace door of the interviewee’s white husband shortly after the perpetrators realised his wife was black.

As far as strategies for dealing with racist incidents, many of those who ran their own business stated that they would call the police if anything serious happened.

Further attitudes towards the Police role and response are given later within this section. It should be noted though, that for some self-employed interviewees, the racist abuse they received seemed to be viewed as a consequence of the job, where alcohol and boredom were perceived as being responsible for the behaviour, rather than racism.

### ***Racism from employers/colleagues***

The majority of interviewees who were employed or self-employed had been subject to racist remarks and comments by their colleagues or employers. A number of interviewees talked of the racist language used by others in their workplace. At times these terms had been used generally, rather than being directed at the interviewee. However, others had been subject to insulting terms. One Asian woman described how :

“... one colleague called me ping pong. I thought it was only joking, but when I told my husband he said it’s being racist. So I talked with my colleague and I told him I don’t like it”.

Others talked about the daily:

“... sly comments and whispering - I can see it in their faces. I try to ignore it but it does hurt”.

One interviewee stated that being Welsh, he was subject to daily taunts at work, whereby his colleagues would take every opportunity to criticise Welsh people, and that the level of racism he encountered was on a par with black and other minority ethnic people:

“They taunt me with ‘the welsh are no good at football or rugby - they are as thick as two short planks and that’s why they came here’ (...) People say ‘Welsh are only bred to go down the pit, that’s why you are small and stupid you taffy twat’ and about the bridge, they say ‘why don’t they blow the bugger up?... I Feel like I’ve been picked on as much as coloured people. They need to realise that Welsh people are on the same level. Accents can be noticeable too as well as physical characteristics”.

The racist attitudes of some employees were very strong and had resulted in them making quite drastic decisions. One manager reported that several white

members of staff did not accept him when he took over the business and therefore left their jobs.

On a practical level, two interviewees stated that they had always been denied leave to celebrate religious festivals.

### **Not being valued**

A number of interviewees felt undervalued at work. Some interviewees felt that their skills were undervalued, whereas others felt that they were undervalued as people.

“ I feel the staff look down on me. I feel that I don't fit in, they are always correcting the way I say things (...) I cannot value who I am and I'm made to feel that everything I do is wrong”.

Some felt that they were not given as much credit as they should have been for their achievements. One interviewee said that she had experienced a lot of difficulties in her professional career because the qualifications and experience she gained overseas are not acknowledged here in the UK. Therefore she is working at a level which is well below her capabilities. Another interviewee had been successful in gaining sponsorship to do an MSc, but was upset by her colleagues' remarks that she had only been successful because she had a foreign sounding name and would 'make up the numbers'. In one case an interviewee felt that he had problems attaining promotion:

“I feel that something is not right, it's not shown, not clear but I think there's something stopping me progressing in my career. I get the feeling that if I was someone else, even doing less work, I would progress more quickly. But you can't see it and can't prove it...”

Other interviewees simply felt that they had been looked down on by their employers and fellow colleagues. In one case, an interviewee explained that her colleagues would not even talk to her until they found out she had a British husband.

For those working in isolation within large organisations, the opportunity to meet with others for mutual support has been successful in some organisations. One interviewee described how her statutory sector employers had started a support group for black and other minority ethnic staff. However, having attended the first meeting she felt that :

“... it might not be such a positive thing to form this group together, as if we were fighting against something. I think it might stir things up too much, reopen old wounds... and I'm not sure about whether to go to the next meeting”.

For some interviewees, attempting to 'fit in' and not assert their difference had been a coping strategy, as drawing attention to their ethnicity had brought only negative results in the past. Therefore, joining a group with a black and minority ethnic identity was considered too high profile for some.

Overall, few interviewees expressed mainly positive experiences of their work colleagues and employers. One person commented:

“My boss is in touch with ethnic minorities and is aware of the issues and very supportive”.

Unfortunately, this was an experience seldom shared by other interviewees.

### **Politics**

Local politicians have an important role in respect of race relations and equality. Interviewees were not asked direct questions about local politicians and generally did not identify issues in relation to political parties and their policies. However, the following incidents were cited. One interviewee described the behaviour and attitudes of a fellow candidate in a local council election:

“During the elections, another candidate said: ‘there’s only one thing I regret, that I didn’t bomb enough Germans to kill your mother’. Then he did the goose step. We complained to police about racial harassment and they took it seriously, went and interviewed people”.

At other times, carrying out his councillor duties he said that he and his wife had been told:

“... we don’t want outsiders here, so go back to Serbia where trouble makers belong” .

### **Racism during leisure time**

Interviewees were asked about any experiences of racism they had encountered during their leisure time. Examples were given of things that had happened in pubs, local parks, in shops and on public transport.

#### **Local pubs**

Six interviewees said that they had encountered difficulties in pubs in the Norton Radstock area. A common experience was being looked at and stared at, which had made interviewees uncomfortable. One man complained that he is often left until last in a queue when things are busy, and that:

“... change is sometimes put on the bar or dropped into my hand as if to avoid physical contact”.

Some interviewees had encountered direct racial abuse:

“In (*named venue*) one person sits there saying ‘fucking Welsh bastard. You’re Welsh, you always will be fucking Welsh’. I’ve lived round here for over 30 years, how long is it before I’ll be accepted?”

Some had encountered such difficulties that they had a very limited choice:

“We have found one pub in the area that we can go to. It’s the only one we dare go in. Other places we do get looked at and tutted at, comments are made. You’ve got to be careful where you go”.

Another interviewee described a time when she went into a pub with two black male friends. After half an hour someone came to warn them that ‘trouble was brewing’ and that they had better leave. She described another incident where a white customer she was talking to had said that she wasn’t ‘good enough to lick the bottom of his shoe’. The interviewee had held back from responding:

“I refrained from glassing him but felt like it. I felt - how dare he, what gives him the right to judge? (...) No, I didn’t report it, I didn’t know who or where to go to talk to about it, so it’s not been resolved”.

In another incident the Police were called by the pub. An interviewee described sitting in a pub, when a white man came up to him and asked him if he had a problem. The white man went on to say that he thought the interviewee had been giving his girlfriend ‘black looks’, and began pushing him. The interviewee’s relatives had tried to intervene, and the pub called the Police. The white man disappeared when they arrived. Whilst the interviewee felt that the Police had tried to deal with the matter in a positive way, they had told him that he should ‘calm down’ and ‘be quiet and not cause any trouble’. The interviewee felt that this was unfair because ‘I was just sitting in the corner that’s all’. He felt that the approach used by the Police had been one of avoidance rather than a clear attempt to resolve the issues.

### ***Outings with children***

One interviewee said that he felt other people and families stare at him and his children sometimes when they visit local parks. However, he added that this is often just the initial reaction of people, who are surprised to see a black family.

One interviewee described an incident at an activity centre, where she had been called ‘nigger’ by another girl. She had reported it to her group leader, and it was dealt with immediately. All the group members had been told that racist insults were not tolerated and they would be asked to leave the group if it happened again. Also, parents were sent a letter including guidelines about racism and bullying to sign and return. The immediate and strong response had made the interviewee feel confident that it would not happen again.

One interviewee described a family outing to the local seaside, where she felt the openly racist attitudes were worse than in Norton Radstock. During the day out (which the family had been looking forward to as a special treat in the summer holidays) the interviewee counted seven separate racist comments and remarks.

### **Shopping**

Six people said that they had difficulties in local shops and supermarkets. Interviewees said that they had been trailed by store detectives, had comments about how much they were spending by the checkout assistant, and had their credit cards examined for a long time. One particular shop was mentioned by six interviewees. Many interviewees who had experienced problems felt that, due to their ethnicity, it had been assumed that they were potential thieves and not financially secure.

Similar to what was written about pubs above, one interviewee complained that she has been left until the last in queues within shops and supermarkets.

### **Public transport**

Eight people said that they had encountered problems whilst using public transport. Difficulties had most commonly occurred on local buses. Interviewees said that they are often stared at and feel that other passengers will try to avoid sitting next to them.

Some interviewees had experienced racist name calling by young people and teenagers on the back of their bus. A regular passenger on one interviewees bus used to call out 'take her off home' to the bus driver, until the interviewee challenged her:

"I told her where to go and now she treats me with more respect".

One interviewee said that whilst he was waiting for a bus into Bath a fellow passenger had said 'you're a bit lost aren't you?' which he felt meant that he was out of his area. One interviewee had experienced patronising attitudes from her regular bus driver:

"Bus drivers can get too cheeky – one calls me 'Paddington' because of the hat I wear, but I'm always polite".

It is apparent that for some black and other minority ethnic people, the anticipation of racism is enough to make them think twice about using public transport, especially at night:

"I feel threatened using public transport at night as there are usually large groups of white male, and the possibility of racial abuse. It hasn't happened to me but I've seen it happening to other people in the evening".

### **Difficulties in using statutory and voluntary sector services**

Several examples of difficulties were given. One interviewee said that he had been to the council with a housing application, and had asked a general question about how long it would take to progress:

"The lady said 'there's no special treatment for Asian people'. I said I wasn't asking because I was Asian, I was just asking to see how long it would take".

Two interviewees felt that they had not been taken seriously in complaints they had made because of their ethnicity. One interviewee described how she had noticed two youths late one night, attempting to break into a local shop. She had notified the Police immediately, but they failed to respond and the break-in went ahead. She said:

“They don’t do anything if you are Chinese. When I have phoned up they hear my voice and don’t do anything. No wonder people don’t report things”.

Another interviewee felt that his complaint to the Council about the problems with illegal parking outside his shop was not dealt with until a white businessman made the same complaint. However, the interviewee acknowledged that the white businessman was influential and well known in the area and it may have been that, rather than his ethnicity, which had led to his complaint being handled swiftly.

Several issues were raised in connection with health service provision. One interviewee stated that although he had moved to the area some time ago, he had kept his Doctor in Bath:

“I don’t like to go to the doctors here – I prefer to carry on using the surgery in Bath where I grew up as I feel the doctors here don’t have any experience of dealing with black people”.

One interviewee described similar difficulties with a local doctor, and had been told ‘the doctor is busy, please come back’. Also, he explained that he had twice attended his dentist for an appointment at a set time, but on arrival had been told that the receptionist had not kept the appointment and that he should make another one. At the time of the interview he said that he had an urgent need to see a dentist. Whilst it may not be the case that health professionals have deliberately discriminated against the interviewees, care should be taken to ensure that full explanations are given to patients if appointments are cancelled. As this report has highlighted, many black and minority ethnic people experience racism and unfair treatment as a regular occurrence, and, within that context, will obviously assume the worst if there is no evidence to the contrary.

One interviewee felt that her Health Visitor had made stereotypical assumptions about her financial situation which were far from the case:

“The Health Visitor keeps presuming we are a low income family which I guess is because of my skin colour... you know, ‘you can get grants for things, free milk from the hospital and have you applied for working families tax credit?’”

As far as the use of voluntary sector services is concerned, information was given out at the end of each interview about local organisations that could offer support and advice on racist incidents, which included B&NES REC and SARI. However, the majority of interviewees who were given this information said

they had not heard of these agencies. This indicates a lack of awareness of the support services that are available.

### **What would make Norton Radstock a better place to live?**

All interviewees were asked what ideas they had for ways in which their quality of life could be improved. Their ideas and suggestions are detailed below.

#### ***Changing attitudes***

Firstly, a number of interviewees expressed a desire for local white people to be more accepting of them within the community:

“I wish people would stop being ignorant.”

“No-one looking and staring at me while I’m shopping.”

“To be accepted as part of the environment, to know that I’m not going to go away. I think I’m part of this area and think I’ve earned the right to sit in my part of England. I feel I’ve made a strong contribution to my community. But people round here won’t improve themselves. They operate in very small circles and they are tight and miserable.”

One person suggested that a way of beginning to change attitudes would be to involve parents in activities at schools where issues to do with racism and race equality could be discussed openly. The interviewee expressed a fear that if attitudes don’t change then problems will continue to ‘bubble up’ and may result in damaging consequences within the community.

#### ***More BOME people living and working in the area***

Seven interviewees said that the quality of their life would improve if more black people came to live or work in the Norton Radstock area. In particular, there were calls for more black and minority ethnic Doctors and Police Officers. One interviewee suggested organisations operating in B&NES could try to provide work placements in the area for black and minority ethnic employees.

Others were keen to see more black people in the area and suggested that a lot could be done to improve the local facilities and schools so that Norton Radstock is seen as a desirable place to live rather than just a cheaper option than Bath or Bristol.

#### ***The role of schools***

A number of interviewees were keen to see more emphasis on multi-cultural education in schools to help engender more accepting attitudes within the next generation:

“There needs to be more multi-cultural emphasis in schools and in youth work.”

“There’s not enough cultural stuff in schools: books with black children in them are about racism. Why can’t they just have black characters doing normal things? (e.g. Jackelyn Wilson books). There should be more black teachers in schools (...) I’m doing singing and dancing lessons via black families education support with black teachers who know about me being me and it’s very different to what we are taught in schools.”

“They need to start teaching at a much younger age – at infant or nursery school. My views now are set – no one can teach me or change me now. By the time they do anything in secondary school its too late. We are a multi cultural society so we need to embrace it in all teaching and instil this in very young children.”

“They should start at a young age with proper information about different cultures.”

“Why aren’t the schools acknowledging black culture in RE?”

One interviewee whose child is bilingual said it would be good if school were able to offer a wider range of languages so that children such as hers could have the opportunity to take formal exams in their home language.

Another interviewee called for access to up to date information of ratios of black and minority ethnic children/white children in schools.

### ***Community resources for black and other minority ethnic people***

Nearly half of those interviewed stated that improved community resources for black and other minority ethnic people would improve the quality of their lives. Ideas on what this might involve included:

“... having more facilities where people can access info on religion and more resources for schools”.

“A facility which enables people to access multi cultural arts music and literature”.

Several people stressed the need for a local community group to be set up where black and other minority ethnic people could meet up regularly. Interviewees who suggested this felt it might go some way towards combating the isolation experienced by many.

“In general there’s no sense of community here. There’s a community centre but we never hear what’s going on there.”

“There are not enough community groups and projects for socialising, especially for newcomers (...) There’s not enough information about what’s available.”

“I’d like somewhere to go, once a month to meet everyone... a newsletter.”

“A group meeting once a month for all ethnic minority families to meet, perhaps at the Somer centre or Methodist church hall.”

“Open Forum meetings. I’d like to get involved in something like a community group. I have friends but they don’t understand me as a person.”

“Networks are important for social integration. The council could write a letter welcoming black people and letting them know what they can access.”

“My family belongs to Black families Education Support Group but all the meetings and functions we have to go into Bath for... Could there be a branch locally?”

“A carnival.”

Along with these calls for stronger community network, two interviewees said it was not possible to buy black hair and beauty products locally. They said that they had to travel to Bristol to buy products and see black hairdressers.

### **Other ideas**

One interviewee stressed the need for the local town council and B&NES to be representative of the communities being served, and that in particular there was a need for people from religious backgrounds other than Christian to get involved in local politics.

One interviewee (mentioned previously) stated that the single thing that would improve the quality of his life was finding a local dentist that would see him.

Finally, and sadly, three people stated that the only thing that would improve their lives would be to move out of the area and live in their country of origin or in another part of Britain surrounded by their extended family.

### **Summary and conclusions**

This section has attempted to provide an insight into and a picture of, the experiences and views of black and other minority ethnic people who live or work in the Norton Radstock area. Whilst some interviewees had only positive things to say about their experiences of the area, these were in a minority.

The data gathered from interviews has highlighted a number of issues. These are listed in Part Five of the report that follows, and will be used to form the basis of the Conclusions and Recommendations.

## **Part Five: Conclusions and Recommendations**

### **Introduction and overview**

The final section of the report draws together the issues that have arisen in the course of discussions with service providers and interviews with black and other minority ethnic people in the Norton Radstock area. One aim of this section will be to build links between the two strands of the research, by identifying deficiencies within service provider organisations that were also identified by black and other minority ethnic interviewees. A further aim is to summarise and highlight issues that arose during the course and suggest possible actions that could be taken to begin to progress race equality issues in the Norton Radstock area. This is given in the form of a list of recommendations. These recommendations include general actions (which will apply to most organisations) and specific actions (which will apply in particular sectors such as education, housing, public transport etc).

This section is structured as follows. Firstly, the experiences of black and other minority ethnic interviewees are summarised in order to provide a picture of the degree of isolation and racism encountered within the Norton Radstock area. This highlights specific problems that have arisen in schools, the local neighbourhood, at work, on public transport and during leisure time.

Secondly, the range of barriers faced by black and other minority ethnic people in the Norton Radstock area in both accessing local services and taking action against racism, are examined. Where possible, these are linked up with barriers identified by service provider agencies.

Thirdly, a list of recommendations to service providers is given. These have been sorted into particular groupings, which are based around the problems highlighted within organisations and in discussions with interviewees.

### **Experiences of isolation and racism**

The following is a summary of the issues outlined in Part 4 of the report, that arose in the interviews with black and other minority ethnic people that were interviewed during the research.

- Many black and other minority ethnic people experience feelings of isolation in the Norton Radstock area, where they stand out as being visibly different. Some interviewees talked of attempting to 'fit in' or 'blend in' within the community, which had at times resulted in a loss of self identity, and a 'denial' of their ethnic background. This negative impact upon self-identity seemed to be particularly acute for those from dual heritage backgrounds, many of who had experienced racist remarks from white family members.
- Most interviewees had experienced racism and hostility within the community. Because of time constraints, all interviewees were asked to

give just one or two examples of racist incidents. Therefore, the incidents described here represent only a sample of the experiences of interviewees.

- Whilst some of the interviewees who had encountered racism within schools felt that their Headteachers had dealt with matters swiftly and positively, others felt that Headteachers had not always taken appropriate action to resolve problems. In one case an interviewee had eventually moved her child to another school which had a more proactive approach to race equality. In other families with more limited resources this course of action might not be possible, which means that other children in similar circumstances may be suffering from ongoing racism which is not being dealt with.
- Many interviewees have experienced racism at work from service users, colleagues and employees. Many self-employed interviewees running shops and takeaways in the area had experienced racist abuse from customers. The perception of some interviewees was that this abuse was often due to boredom and fuelled by alcohol.
- Most of those who had experienced racist abuse from their neighbours had tended not to report it to the Police. It was felt that the Police would not be able to do anything to stop it, and that bringing in 'authority' would only incite more hostility from neighbours. Instead, most interviewees talked of trying to gain the respect of neighbours by being strong and dealing with it themselves.
- Racist incidents had occurred even in leisure time. Examples of incidents in local pubs were given, with some interviewees stating that the reactions of pub landlords and customers had drastically limited their choice of venue, even for family outings to pub gardens.
- Some interviewees had encountered difficulties in using public transport. This had led to a reluctance on the part of some to use local buses in the evenings, because of a fear of racial abuse from groups of white male passengers. Many people in rural areas can feel cut off from local amenities if they have no transport of their own. This issue is compounded for black and other minority ethnic people if they feel unsafe using public transport.
- Some difficulties had arisen in accessing statutory services. These difficulties ranged from a lack of black and other minority ethnic GPs in the area, (who were judged by some interviewees to be better able to treat black and other minority ethnic patients), problems with cancelled appointments (without explanation), and stereotypical assumptions or racist remarks made by service providers.
- The suggestions made by interviewees as to what would improve the quality of their lives in the area related strongly to their experiences of isolation and difficulties being accepted within the community. Ideas were put forward as to the role that schools could play in preparing the new generation for life in an increasingly multi-racial and multi-cultural society.

There was also a strong call from many interviewees for an opportunity to meet regularly in a local venue with other black and minority ethnic people and families as a means of providing mutual support and engendering a sense of belonging within the community.

Overall, the incidence of racism may well be similar to that experienced by black and other minority ethnic people living in more urban areas. However, in rural areas, this is coupled with isolation and a lack of support services within the community. In these circumstances racism can often go unreported and remain hidden, leaving service providers to assume there is 'no problem here'. Victims are often alone in dealing with problems associated with racism.

### **Problems and barriers in accessing local services**

Apart from difficulties in using public transport at night, there were no other issues raised by interviewees that had actually prevented them from using local services. However, in interviews with black and other minority ethnic people and discussions with service providers, a range of barriers became apparent that seemed to have caused services to be underused, or agency responses to be not meeting the needs of diverse service users.

#### ***Low take up of services***

Some local service providers, especially in the voluntary sector, stated that their services are underused by black and other minority ethnic people. However, in many organisations it was hard to estimate whether services were being underused because of the lack of systematic ethnic monitoring procedures.

One reason for the apparently low take up of services appeared in some cases to be a lack of awareness of the services on offer. For example, the majority of interviewees who were offered information about support and advice available to them on racist incidents had not heard of the agencies detailed on the list that was given to them. This list included B&NES REC and SARI, both of whom have bases in Bath but not in the Norton Radstock area.

Little or no outreach work had been undertaken by organisations that had taken part in the research, in order to publicise services and find out about the needs of local black and other minority ethnic people. One difficulty raised by service providers was the absence of local black and other minority ethnic community groups with which to consult, and the difficulty in knowing exactly who and where the community is.

#### ***Under-reporting of racist incidents***

Still on a theme of low take up of services, as detailed above, there was a reluctance on the part of some interviewees to involve 'the authorities' (namely the Police and Somer Housing) when they encountered racism within their neighbourhoods. This was due to two main reasons: firstly, that this might make matters worse and result in more victimisation, and second, that the authorities would not respond quickly enough or be able to resolve matters. These types of responses were in contrast to one interviewee's experience of

using the Police, SARI and Somer Housing to deal with racism, where matters had been resolved to the satisfaction of the interviewee.

The research has also highlighted examples where the term 'racist incident' seems to have been misinterpreted to include action between a black perpetrator and a white victim, where there was no evidence of racial motivation.

***Services which are inappropriate to the needs of black and OME people***

Being offered a service that in some way fails to acknowledge one's ethnicity, cultural or religious background may also put up a barrier, which can prevent good quality services from being accessed.

This issue was particularly pertinent when discussing schools and the extent to which multi-cultural education was a part of the curriculum. Whilst there were several examples of good practice (that should be shared), many parents and children expressed a view that their school curriculum tends to focus almost exclusively on white British culture. Furthermore, many schools are using 'international education' and overseas links to emphasise multiculturalism, which does not help emphasise that Britain itself is multi-cultural.

During the research, both black and other minority ethnic interviewees and service providers highlighted problems they had encountered by the adoption of a 'colour blind' approach in the provision of services. Providing the same service to everyone '*regardless*' of their race or ethnicity may mean that those in a minority miss out. Clearly though, there is a delicate balance to be struck between acknowledging someone's ethnicity and the impact that might have on their service needs, and falling into the trap of stereotyping individuals solely on the basis of their ethnicity. The view here is that services should be offered with '*due regard*' to the ethnicity, gender, age, disability status and any other aspect of a persons background that might be relevant to their needs.

Another reason for the services offered being at times inappropriate to the needs of black and other minority ethnic people concerns staffing. As is often the case, organisations that took part in the research had disproportionately low numbers of black and other minority ethnic staff (who also tend to be vertically segregated in lower level employment). There is thought to be a direct link between staffing and service provision: a diverse staff team will be more in tune with and better able to respond to the needs of diverse service users.

Finally, a number of issues were raised about the racist remarks and stereotypical assumptions of staff in service provider organisations. The remarks and actions of housing officers, Headteachers, school meals assistants, healthcare workers, and security guards, amongst many others, were highlighted as examples of how low levels of awareness and prejudiced attitudes can affect the way that services are delivered on the ground. The internal culture of an organisation can also be affected by these attitudes; a number of those interviewed for this research who are currently working in statutory and voluntary agencies and small businesses in the Norton Radstock

area have experienced racism from employers and colleagues, as well as service users.

## **Recommendations**

The following list of recommendations has been developed in order to address the issues raised by black and other minority ethnic interviewees.

### **1. The take up of services**

The take up of some local services by black and other minority ethnic people is thought to be fairly low.

#### ***Possible actions for voluntary and statutory sector organisations***

- *Where this has not already started, develop and implement systems for the ethnic monitoring of service users. This will help to assess current levels of use, patterns of use, and be useful as a measure of progress.*
- *Undertake outreach work within the community. Many organisations had expressed difficulties in assessing who and where the black and other minority ethnic population are within the Norton Radstock area. However, there are examples within this research project of successful ways of contacting people: e.g. using local researchers/outreach workers, going out to meet people rather than just writing letters, and using one contact as a lead to more.*
- *Publicising services more widely. Many interviewees had not even heard of B&NES Racial Equality Council or SARI.*

### **2. Reporting, recording and responding to racist incidents**

The data from interviews in this research indicates that racist incidents are under-reported, with victims often attempting to manage problems alone without the support of agencies.

#### ***Possible actions for Somer Housing***

- *Ensure all tenants are aware of the action that will be taken against those who racially harass others.*
- *In association with SARI, examine policies on moving victims of racial harassment.*
- *Discuss potential racism/isolation with black and other minority ethnic people and families when offering tenancies in the Norton Radstock area (and offer support at the outset).*
- *Supply all tenants with details of support services available.*

#### ***Possible actions for Avon and Somerset Constabulary***

According to the Hate Crime Officer, more racist incidents are being reported. Those who overcome their initial barriers in reporting incidents to the police are often said to be surprised at the level and quality of support available to them.

- *Undertake outreach work with local black and OME businesses to build up trusting relationships (the Hate Crime Officer explained that most recorded racial incidents in the Norton Radstock area happen in takeaways at night).*
- *Examine the assertion that some interviewees felt they had not been taken seriously by the Police (whilst this might have only happened on one occasion, this can lead to an increase in the lack of faith that black and other minority ethnic people have in the Police).*

#### **Possible actions for Schools**

- *Regularly publicise the school commitment to race equality – in newsletters to parents.*
- *Ensure that pupils and parents know what to do if they experience racism in school.*
- *Deal with racist incidents swiftly and publicly.*
- *Ensure that all staff (teaching, support, school meals and supervision staff) are aware and able to respond to racist incidents in class and at break-times – raise awareness through training and discussion.*
- *Work with community support groups (e.g. SARI) in developing responses to racial discrimination and promoting race equality.*

#### **Possible actions for all employers**

- *Develop and publicise a racial harassment policy for employees (Statutory organisations have a duty under the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000).*
- *Encourage black and OME workers to disclose racist incidents perpetrated by service users and colleagues.*
- *Support employees who experience racism or racial abuse. Withdraw services from service users who are racially abusive.*

#### **Possible actions for First Badgerline**

- *Racist abuse on buses: review the training available to bus drivers, along with sanctions available in dealing with abusive passengers. Publicise anti-racism/racial harassment policies in poster format on buses.*

#### **Possible actions for all organisations**

Finally, the research findings indicate that those responsible for recording racist incidents may not always be clear about what constitutes a racist incident.

- *Ensure that staff are able to identify and deal with racist incidents.*
- *Clarify any misconceptions.*

### **3. Services that meet the needs of black and other minority ethnic people**

#### ***Possible actions voluntary and statutory sector services could take***

Black and other minority ethnic people still represent a very small proportion of the mainly white population of the Norton Radstock area. The 'colour blind' approach, whereby black and other minority ethnic people are considered to have the same needs as the majority population, had proved problematic for some. The targeting of mainstream services to such small populations may be impractical.

- *Explore the possibility of a multi agency approach in providing targeted support and advice sessions on a peripatetic basis in the Norton Radstock area (e.g. through the CAB, B&NES REC, SWAN, SARI etc).*
- *Ensure staff are aware of the need to acknowledge ethnicity, culture and religion in service provision. Provide opportunities for staff development.*
- *Build in knowledge and awareness of race equality issues into recruitment and selection materials: expect a commitment to race equality in all posts.*
- *Undertake positive action to encourage black and other minority ethnic applicants for employment opportunities (special mention was made of the need for more black GPs and Police Officers in the Norton Radstock area).*
- *Consider secondments for black and other minority ethnic staff to undertake short term projects and work in the Norton Radstock area.*

#### ***Possible actions for those working with young people (schools, pre-schools and other educational establishments)***

Two issues arose in the research: the need to build the self esteem of black and other minority ethnic young people, and also the need to encourage positive attitudes of acceptance within the young white community. The STAR worker stated that it is easier to instil positive attitudes of acceptance within children at a young age than it is when they are older.

- *Ensure that the day to day curriculum takes every opportunity to integrate aspects of multi racial and multi cultural Britain (e.g. in Literacy, Music, RE etc). On top of this, spend time on particular topics (religious festivals, food etc).*
- *Ensure staff are aware of ways in which the curriculum can be used to promote race equality.*
- *Develop means whereby examples of good practice are shared between schools.*
- *Explore the possibilities of developing links with nearby schools within urban areas, where there is more diversity (e.g. Bristol).*
- *Encourage black 'role models' into schools to meet with children (involve parents if they are willing).*
- *Encourage black and other minority ethnic people to become school governors (possibility of co-options through the Black Families Education support Group).*
- *Circulate the report to the Lawrence Group within B&NES Council.*

#### **4. Leisure time**

##### ***Possible actions that could be taken by shops and pubs in Norton Radstock***

- *Examine the attitudes and behaviour of security guards, sales assistants and checkout staff in shops. Address racial prejudices and stereotyping in customer care training, including legal responsibilities.*
- *Pubs: possibly through breweries. Again, as above, address through customer care training.*
- *Identify the potential economic impact upon the Norton Radstock area if black and other minority ethnic people are deterred from visiting the area. Address through tourism bodies etc.*

#### **5. Isolation**

##### ***Possible actions that could be taken to address experiences of isolation***

- *Set up a black and other minority ethnic community group within the area to provide mutual support for individuals and families (explore local venues and existing networks as potential structures to accommodate such a group).*
- *Explore potential funding for such a group (possibly undertaken by B&NES REC, Voluntary First, etc).*
- *Examine possible transport options for black and other minority ethnic people in the Norton Radstock area to access events and services in Bath.*
- *Harness the energy and enthusiasm of people who have become involved in this research project. Many interviewees have expressed their needs for support. The two local researchers have built up very positive relationships and links within the community during their involvement. They are now well placed to carry through some of this work if funding was found.*

##### **Looking to the future: concluding remarks**

The research steering group, PRIDE, will be considering ways in which the findings and recommendations arising from this research are integrated into future initiatives. Future development of the local community and subsequent regeneration strategies should include measures to address the issues raised in this report. In order for this to happen there is a need for PRIDE or a successor group to be involved in any future partnership for the area (e.g. the Market and Coastal Towns Initiative).

## **APPENDIX 1 – Research Brief**

### **The needs of black and minority ethnic people in Norton Radstock Research Assistant details**

Two or three research assistants are sought for their help with the project during October and November 2002. One aim of the project is to involve local people who are aware of the issues affecting black and other minority ethnic people in the Norton Radstock area.

Tasks will be allocated according to interest and experience. Support will be given in undertaking aspects of the research in order to make it a positive experience for those who take part.

Tasks may include the following:

- Contributing to the research design. This will involve attending a meeting and putting forward ideas about the sorts of questions that could be asked of interviewees. An interview schedule with a set format will be developed from this so that each interviewee is asked about the same issues.
- Helping to find people who are willing to be interviewed. This may involve using personal contacts or networks (e.g. families from local schools, friends, etc). The research co-ordinator has some contacts already and will use these to 'snowball' (that is, use each interviewee as a potential link to others). Also, local restaurants and takeaways will be visited.
- Attending a briefing meeting. When the interview schedule is agreed, there will be another meeting to discuss some of the issues about carrying out the research. (e.g. useful interviewing skills, how to encourage interviewees to say more, how to note down responses, how to stay on track, how to sum up and finish off, along with the principle of confidentiality).
- Carrying out interviews. It is hoped that each research assistant will have the opportunity to carry out at least 5 interviews. Interviews will last for about 30-40 minutes, and include a short time afterwards for writing up (therefore, each one should take about an hour in total). The research co-ordinator will be on hand throughout this period (over the phone or in person if need be, to talk through any issues that arise). The research co-ordinator will also carry out interviews. The aim is to interview between 30-40 people, with a good cross section of ethnicities, and a balance between genders and age.
- Attending a debriefing meeting after all interviews have been carried out. There will be time to explain the issues that arose in each interview, and to pass on the notes that were made, so that these can be written up. There will also be the chance to discuss the process of carrying out the interviews.

This makes a total of approximately 15 hours work. There may be an opportunity to carry out more interviews, depending upon how many research assistants there are, what time each has available and how many potential interviewees we find! The involvement of local people as research assistants will be of great benefit to the project. Also, this is a development opportunity and hopefully it will be a useful and rewarding experience for those who take part.

## **APPENDIX 2 - Publicity Flyer**

**Are you a black or other minority ethnic person, or the parent of a dual heritage child, living in the Norton Radstock area?  
Would you like to tell us your views on living in the area and receive a £10 voucher?**

***The Bath and North East Somerset Racial Equality Council are co-ordinating a piece of research to identify the needs of black and ethnic minority people who live in the Norton Radstock area. We want to find out about your experiences of living in a predominantly white community, and the extent to which you feel isolated or have experienced racism. We also want to know about any problems you may have had in using local services. The research is funded by the Norton Radstock Single Regeneration Budget scheme.***

- Anyone from a black or other minority ethnic group can take part. Also, we are keen to hear from white parents of dual heritage children. We want to talk to people of all ages and different backgrounds. Even if you have experienced no problems living in the area we still need your help and you can still take part. (If you are under 16 you will need to get permission from a parent or carer).
- What you say will be totally **confidential**
- It will take about half an hour
- You can talk with the project worker on a one to one or in a group with your family or friends at a time and place that suits you
- If you take part you will be given a **£10 voucher** (from a choice of Safeway, Waterstones or HMV)
- What you say will help Bath and North East Somerset Racial Equality Council and other organisations plan local services in the future
- You will have the chance to find out what the results are

### **Interested in taking part?**

You can contact the project co-ordinator, Louise Murphy (Tel: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: [Louisemurphy41@hotmail.com](mailto:Louisemurphy41@hotmail.com)) or you can pass on your contact details to the person who gave you this form. We shall arrange to see you at a time and place that suits you, sometime in October 2002.

**Looking forward to hearing from you!**

## **APPENDIX 3 – Interview Schedule**

### **Norton Radstock Research**

Interviewee number

Introduction and starting off: recap project aims and why important (in one sentence), stress confidentiality, records won't be kept, timing (30/40 minutes), If there are current problems I can let you know where to go for help.

#### **1. Age**

- Under 16
- 16-25
- 26-35
- 36-45
- 46-59
- 60 plus

#### **Gender**

- Male
- Female

#### **2. How would you describe your ethnic group?**

##### **White**

- British
- Irish
- Any other white background (*please specify*)

##### **Mixed**

- Black Caribbean and white
- Black African and white
- Asian and white
- Any other mixed background (*please specify*)

##### **Asian or Asian British**

- Indian
- Pakistani
- Bangladeshi
- Any other Asian background (*please specify*)

##### **Black or black British**

- Caribbean
- African
- Any other black background (*please specify*)

##### **Chinese or other ethnic group**

- Chinese
- Any other (*please specify*)

**If you live as part of a family unit, please specify the ethnicity of your partner/children/other family members according to the above categories.**

Partner

Children

Other family members who live with you

**3. Where do you live? (*please specify which part of NR*)**

**4. How long have you lived in the Norton Radstock area?**

**5. (*If appropriate*), for what reasons did you move here?**

**6. Do you have any extended family members living in the area?** (*parents, brothers, sisters etc*)

**7. Tell me about your experiences of living here as a person from a black or OME group/ parent of a dual heritage child etc (or 'Tell me about your experiences of working here')** (*trying to pick up on isolation*)

**8. Have you experienced any hostility, negative attitudes or reactions to you because of your ethnic background?**

- a lot of hostility/negative reactions
- some hostility/negative reactions
- not much hostility/not many negative reactions
- not had any hostility/negative reactions

*(add to this below with more detail if needed to gauge the level of hostility)*

**9. Have things happened in**

- School (*how many times approx*)
- In your neighbourhood/at home (*how many times approx*)
- At work (*how many times approx*)
- When you have been socialising (*how many times*)
- Other places (*please specify where and how many times*)

**10. Tell me about some of the things that you have experienced** (ask for one or two examples)

*Try and cover the following questions*

- *What happened?*
- *To whom?*
- *When?*
- *Where?*
- *What did you do?*
- *Did you report it?*
- *If not, what stopped you?*
- *Has it been resolved?*
- *If so, how?*

*(use this page and the next to note down the examples)*

**11. Apart from direct racism where people have been hostile towards you, have you ever experienced any difficulties because others are unaware of your needs or make assumptions about you or your family?** (*e.g. the curriculum at school not valuing your culture, time off work for religious festivals, health issues – Mongolian blue spot; etc*)

**12. Are there any local services you find it hard to use because of your ethnic group/culture?** (*e.g. health, public transport, leisure facilities, youth clubs, playgroups, schools/colleges, advice centres, housing services, etc*)

13. If you think there are any gaps, please say what you think they are.

14. If you have experienced racism or isolation in the Norton Radstock area, what would make it a better place for you to live in/ what would improve the quality of your life?

**Ending**

- Reassurance of confidentiality, what happens to info after: analysis and shredding
- Results: If interested, can participants be contacted again with summary of findings?
- Disclaimer: ask to sign permission slip to contact again with information as requested (overleaf)
- Other potential interviewees: any friends, family members, other contacts who might be willing to take part? (Give flyer for interviewee to pass on)
- Give list of contacts/leaflet in relation to racist incidents
- Give information about rural racism meeting in Radstock 7<sup>th</sup> Nov.
- Thank and give voucher

Voucher given  state which .....

**Bath and North East Somerset Racial Equality Council  
Research on black and minority ethnic communities in Norton Radstock**

I give my permission to be contacted at a later date in relation to the research findings

**Contact details:**

Name  
Address  
Telephone:  
Email:

Thank you for your time

## References

Bath and North East Somerset Council Youth and Community Service (2001): *Profile of Norton Radstock and Surrounding Area* (B&NES Council)

Mohammed Dhalech (1999): *Challenging Racism in the Rural Idyll : Final report of the Rural Race Equality Project, Cornwall, Devon and Somerset, 1996-1998* (National Association of Citizen's Advice Bureaux)

Eric Jay (1992): *"Keep them in Birmingham": Challenging racism in south-west England* (CRE Publications)

## **Useful Contacts**

### **Bath & NE Somerset Racial Equality Council**

5 Pierrepont Place, Bath, BA1 1JX

Tel: 01225 442352

### **SARI (Support Against Racist Incidents)**

427 Stapleton Road, Easton, Bristol, BS5 6NA.

Tel: 01179 525652

### **Avon & Bristol Law Centre**

2 Moon Street, Stokes Croft, Bristol, BS2 8QE.

Tel: 01179 248662

### **Bath Citizens Advice Bureau**

2 Edgar Buildings, George Street, Bath, BA1 2EE.

Tel: 01225 464479

### **Off The Record (Bath)**

Open House Centre, Manvers Street, Bath, BA1 1JW.

Tel: 01225 312481

### **Police Hate Crime Unit**

Bath Police Station, Manvers Street, Bath, BA1 1JN.

Tel: 01225 842475

### **Black & OME Mental Health Services (MOSAIC)**

B&NES Council Social & Housing Services  
PO Box 3343, Bath, BA1 2ZH.

Tel: 01225 396357

### **Creating Unity Through Equality (CUTE)**

C/o Susan Bowen

Trimbridge House, Trim Street, Bath, BA1 2DP.

Tel: 01225 477278

### **Support & Training Against Racism (STAR)**

Riverside Youth & Community Centre

York Place, London Road, Bath, BA1 6AE.

Tel: 01225 336274

### **Black Families Education Support Group**

5 Pierrepont Place, Bath, BA1 1JX.

Tel: 01225 442352

## **Black & Minority Ethnic Community Development Forum**

Community Development Officer  
Bath & NES REC, 5 Pierrepont Place, Bath, BA1 1JX. Tel: 01225 442352

## **Bath Islamic Centre**

8 Pierrepont Street, Bath, BA1 1LA. Tel: 01225 460922

## **Bath East Asian Chinese & Friends Group (BEACH)**

C/o Community Development Officer  
Bath & NES REC, 5 Pierrepont Place, Bath, BA1 1JX. Tel: 01225 442352

## **Barbados Caribbean Friends Association (Bath Branch)**

263 Newbridge Road, Bath, BA1 3HJ. Tel: 01225 336553

## **Bath West Indian Multi-cultural Social Activity Centre**

3 Longacre, London Road, Bath, BA1 5NL. Tel: 01225 461636

## **Bath Ethnic Minority Senior Citizens Association**

Fairfield House, 2 Kelston Road, Bath, BA1 3QJ. Tel: 01225 464165

## **Association for Jamaicans Trust**

C/o 67 Ringswell Gardens, Grosvenor, Bath, BA1 6BN.

## **Bath Multi-Racial Club**

9 Duke Street, Bath, BA2 4AG Tel: 01225 444513

## **Bangladesh Association**

Rajpoot Restaurant, 4a Argyle Street, Bath, BA2 4BA. Tel: 01225 466833