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## YOUNG PEOPLE FROM ETHNIC MINORITY BACKGROUNDS: EVIDENCE FROM THE EDUCATION MAINTENANCE ALLOWANCE PILOTS DATABASE

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### Introduction

This report explores the transitions made by young people from ethnic minority backgrounds from compulsory education, and their subsequent education and labour market experiences. Data from the large scale longitudinal surveys, undertaken as part of the evaluation of the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) pilots, allow comparisons to be made between the experiences of white, Indian, Pakistani or Bangladeshi and black young people as they reflect on their experiences during school years 10 and 11 in the months following the end of compulsory education (at the ages of 16 or 17 years) (Part A). The longitudinal nature of the surveys mean that the circumstances of these young people two years later (at the ages of 18 or 19 years) can also be examined in relation to their post-16 experiences of education and the labour market (Part B).

### Key Findings

- Negative experiences in Years 10 and 11 seemed to be associated with lower levels of achievement at the end of Year 11, particularly for white and black young people.
- Despite their relatively low levels of Year 11 achievement, Pakistani/Bangladeshi young people (along with Indian young people) were the group most likely to have remained in education.
- Brothers and sisters seem to play a particular important role in the decision about what to do after compulsory education for Indian and Pakistani/Bangladeshi young people.
- Black and Pakistani/Bangladeshi young people were more likely to say they had left education because they couldn't find a post-16 place.
- Indian and Pakistani/Bangladeshi young people were much more likely to have left education because of their parents wishes than other ethnic groups.
- Black and Pakistani/Bangladeshi young people were particularly likely to say that EMA had been important in their decision to remain in education.
- As well as being the groups most likely to remain in education immediately after the end of compulsory education, Indian and Pakistani/Bangladeshi young people were also most likely to remain in education for the next two years.
- Black and white young people were least likely both to remain initially and to be retained in education.
- After two years in post 16 full-time education almost one third of black young people were not in education employment or training (NEET), compared to approximately one-sixth of white or Pakistani/Bangladeshi young people who had remained in education for two years.
- Controlling for other characteristics known to be associated with young people's post-16 destinations, such as socio-economic group and Year 11 achievement:
  - At ages 16, 17 and 18, young people from each of the three ethnic minority groups were less likely to be in work, with or without training, and, hence, more likely to be in education than white young people
  - But black young people were more than twice as likely to be NEET, rather than in full-time education, as white young people at both 17 and 18 years
  - By contrast, at the age of 18 years Indian and Pakistani/Bangladeshi young people were less likely to be NEET and more likely to be in full time education than white young people.

## Methodology

Large random samples of young people in ten of the original EMA pilot areas and 11 control areas were drawn from two cohorts: those who completed compulsory education in summer 1999 and summer 2000. These young people (and their parents) were interviewed for the first time between Autumn and Spring of the first academic year following their completion of compulsory schooling, that is, when they were aged between 16 and 17 years. Three further interviews were conducted with the young people at annual intervals. The data are not nationally representative because the urban pilot and control areas were chosen as areas of relatively high deprivation and because those eligible for EMA are a relatively deprived sub-group of young people within the pilot and control areas. The 14,700 young people included in the analysis in Part A were eligible for EMA on the grounds that their parents had incomes of £30,000 or less at the time they were first interviewed. Therefore, although data have been weighted to be representative of all young people and to account for differential non-response. In Part B of the report, analysis is based on the 8,300 young people who took part in the first three survey interviews, when they were approximately 16, 17 or 18 years old. Data have been weighted to account for attrition (young people leaving the survey between interviews).

## Results

### Young People at 16

The first section of the report considers young people at the start of Year 12, that is, when they were 16 or 17 years old, in terms of their reflections of their experiences during Years 10 and 11 and how these seem to be related to their current activity (destination). Differences between ethnic groups emerged with respect to many of the indicators used.

Young ethnic minority people faced an increased risk of exclusion from school and of being accused of bullying, particularly, young black people. By contrast, young Indian and Pakistani/Bangladeshi people had a low risk of exclusion, bullying or being bullied. Caring responsibilities were found to be relatively common among Pakistani/Bangladeshi young people, although this did not appear to impede their Year 11 achievement levels to the same extent as other forms of disadvantage

(exclusion, bullying etc.), which were associated with lower achievement levels for both this and other ethnic groups.

The analysis confirmed evidence from earlier research that ethnic minority groups, in particular young Indian and Pakistani/Bangladeshi people, have a greater propensity to stay on in education than young White people.

Young people had used different sources of advice to inform their decisions about what to do after Year 11. All young people sought or received the advice of parents and schools. Young Indians and Pakistani/Bangladeshi were also more likely than others to have sought and received advice from siblings, whereas young black people frequently relied on advice from professionals, i.e. schools, the Careers Service or training organisations. All ethnic minority groups felt that they had received the most helpful advice from careers teachers or tutors at their school.

Among young people who did not continue in post-16 education, the desire to seek and obtain work or work with training and earn an income were the main reasons for leaving education. Financial constraints and parents' preferences were important reasons for young Indian and Pakistani/Bangladeshi people to leave education.

There was a high level of awareness of EMA in the pilot areas, although levels of awareness among young people not in full-time education were much lower. At the time of the interviews most applicants, regardless of ethnic background, had already been awarded their allowance.

EMA had made a positive contribution to their decision to continue in education for approximately half of young people in receipt of EMA. The importance of EMA in influencing the decision to stay on in further education clearly relates to the level of the award and how satisfied the young person was with their post-16 choice. This, in turn, varies by different ethnic groups.

### Young People from 16 to 19.

The second part of the report shifts the focus to change in young people's destinations between the start of Year 12 when they were 16 or 17 years of age and two years later, when they were 18 or 19. It examines patterns of participation in post-16 education (and other destinations) in two ways: first,

by focussing on the group of young people who initially remained in full-time education at the start of Year 12 and following their changing destination patterns; secondly, by taking ALL young people at the start of Year 12, in other words, including those who had left education, and tracking them over the next two years.

***Young people who remained in full-time education at the start of Year 12***

Table 1 shows the destinations of young people who had initially remained in full-time education at the start of Year 12 one year and two years later, when they were 17 and 18 years of age. It shows that although, as shown in the first part of the report, young people from each ethnic minority background were more likely than white young people to remain in full-time education at age 16, the proportions leaving over the next two years differed significantly, as did their destinations after full-time education. Indian young people sustained their initially high participation rate in full-time education, with the small minority who did leave between the ages of 16 and 18 mainly entering work; relatively small proportions of Indian young people entered the NEET group on leaving education, especially at age 17.

Pakistani/Bangladeshi young people also had higher rates of post 16 education than white young people and also had the highest retentions rate in full time-education, by age 18, of all ethnic groups. However, those who did leave education had a relatively high chance of entering the NEET group, particularly at age 17.

Black young people also had higher rates of participation in full-time education at age 16 than white young people, but they had the lowest retention rate of all ethnic groups. In addition, relatively large proportions of black young people who left education at age 17 and 18 became NEET. Over one-fifth of black young people who had spent two years in post-16 education were NEET at age 18 compared with less than one in ten among each of the other ethnic groups.

Table 1 Destinations at Ages 17 and 18 Years of Young People in Education at 16 years

	Education	Work With Training	Work without Training	NEET
<b>17 years:</b>				
White	80	8	7	4
Indian	94	2	1	3
Pakistani/ Bangladeshi	86	3	3	9
Black	72	7	7	14
<b>18 years:</b>				
White	58	19	14	9
Indian	79	9	4	8
Pakistani/ Bangladeshi	82	5	6	8
Black	47	20	11	21

Base: Young people who were in full-time education at the start of Year 12. Table reads: *'Of white young people who were in education at the start of Year 12, 80 per cent were still in education one year later, at the age of 17 years. Of white young people who were in education at the start of Year 12 AND one year later, at the age of 17 years, 58 per cent were still in education one year later at the age of 18 years'*.

***All young people between the ages of 16 and 18 years***

Focusing on the destinations of all young people at the age of 18, rather than just on those who initially entered full-time education at 16, significant differences again emerged by ethnic group. White and black young people were least likely to be in full-time education at age 18, but white young people were most likely to be in work, with or without training, in contrast to black young people among whom almost one third were NEET at the age of 18.

Significant differences emerged in the proportions of young people in full-time education at age 18 according to sex, socio-economic group and level of Year 11 achievement. However, multinomial regression analysis that took into account the effect of socio-economic group and Year 11 achievement showed that, in each of the three years, Indian and Pakistani/Bangladeshi young people were more likely to be in full-time education than work, training or NEET destinations, compared to white young people. By contrast, although black young people were less likely to be in the NEET group at age 16 (and more likely to be in full-time

education) than white young people, this trend was reversed at ages 17 and 18 when black young people were significantly more likely to be NEET, as opposed to in full-time education, than white young people.

#### **Additional Information**

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