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Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills

Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

Barriers to Learning Amongst Selected Communities Final Report

Research

Barriers to Learning Amongst Selected Communities Final Report

Audience Advice and guidance organisations, Careers Wales, Colleges of Further Education, employers, training providers and DCELLS programme delivery, funding and planning departments.

Overview This research study investigates the barriers to learning amongst four selected communities. The four selected communities are the Pakistani; Bangladeshi; Somali and African Caribbean communities in South Wales.Whilst it is known these four communities face considerable disadvantage in terms of accessing learning, training and employment opportunities, little research has been undertaken on the social and cultural barriers confronting the four communities and their motivations for participating in learning and the labour market.

Action required No action required.

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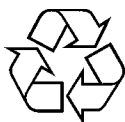
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

E.1   York Consulting was commissioned by the Department for Education Children Lifelong Learning and Skills (DCELLS, Welsh Assembly Government) to undertake a research study into the barriers to learning amongst four selected communities.   The four selected communities are the **Pakistani**; **Bangladeshi**; **Somali** and **African Caribbean** communities in South Wales.   Whilst it is known these four communities face considerable disadvantage in terms of accessing learning, training and employment opportunities, little research has been undertaken on the social and cultural barriers confronting the four communities and their motivations for participating in learning and the labour market.

E.2   The specific aims of the research were to:

- understand the motivations and rationale for take up of different forms of learning opportunities by individuals in the four communities selected;

- explore the barriers, motivations and other reasons that may exist to prevent the take up of learning and training for these communities;

- explore the impact that training and learning has on individuals, including non-completers.

Research Methodology

E.3   A range of statistical publications and research documents, both qualitative and quantitative, were reviewed. This provided the context for the primary research and highlighted the specific disadvantages these four communities face with regard to participation in learning and employment.

E.4   18 focus groups were completed across the four communities and one control group was undertaken with seven White young people disengaged

from education and training. This was to enable an element of comparison between young people not in education, training or employment from the four communities and the wider White population.

E.5   Consultations with 29 stakeholders were undertaken to obtain the views of those working with learners / non-learners from the four communities. Stakeholders were based in schools, colleges, learning providers, community learning centres and voluntary / community organisations.

Limitations to the Research

E.6   Due to the nature of available quantitative data sources, obtaining comprehensive and accurate data on the specific communities was not always possible. Statistics available from the Welsh Assembly on post-16 participation are often only presented using the broad ethnic minority categories of Black, Asian, White and White Other. Clearly this prevents analysis of the sub-groups within these broad classifications.

E.7   This was a particular challenge for analysing data on the Somali community.   Somalia is a country of origin rather than an ethnic classification. For this reason, data for the Somali community is always contained within the more widely used Black African classification. This limited our ability to draw conclusions from some of the statistical data regarding the Somali community alone.

E.8   This research was largely qualitative. It is important to note that the figures overall are quite small, particularly when sub analysis of community background, age ranges or gender is taken into account.   This is particularly the case for the **African Caribbean** community.   Where particular issues or key messages were raised by the *majority* of participants this has been highlighted. However some caution must be undertaken when interpreting the findings as in some instances they are not necessarily representative of the whole community.

E.9.   The White control group mirrored one target group from the selected communities: i.e. young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) – a group of particular interest for this research. This was thought to be the most appropriate method rather than aiming to include a very mixed group which would yield little confidence in the findings. However this group was still small and thus is not representative of the very diverse nature of the NEET group.

E.10   The key findings from this piece of research were presented to DCELLS as well as stakeholders and research participants on completion of the fieldwork and reporting.   The findings and recommendations were well received and prompted interesting discussion during the presentation.

Key Findings and Recommendations

E.11   This research has identified a range of social and cultural barriers facing the four communities, in addition to the key motivations, influences and decision-making factors specific to each community group. As such **ten** practical recommendations to boost participation in learning by the four communities have been developed.

E.12   Lack of fluent English language skills was a commonly cited barrier amongst the Bangladeshi, Pakistani and Somali communities.   This is preventing community members from competing effectively in the labour market. It can be challenging for parents to play an active role in their children's education if they lack English literacy skills. Lack of fluency in English can result in some children having to constantly catch up at school. This may have a lasting impact both on their motivation and participation later on in their learning.

Recommendation One
There is a need to ensure that the provision of English language courses is of sufficient quality and quantity to meet the needs of the market. • Support for English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) learners needs to be adequate to enable individuals to effectively access and benefit from learning and employment opportunities. • There is a need to ensure that the focus of these classes is on the needs and ability of appropriate groups which is crucial to maintain motivation and promote progression. Course content needs to focus on employment skills, such as CV writing and interview skills which would also enable communities to build wider skills.

E.13   Linked to the issue of providing English language support to learners from these communities, in order to make the mainstream curriculum more accessible, there is significant potential in providing teachers and tutors with the skills to do this within class.   This would promote the sustainability of EAL provision and reduce its status as a 'bolt-on' support function.   In addition to English language support, there is some perception that the content of the curriculum may, in some instances, be unwittingly discriminating against learners from the four selected communities.

Recommendation Two
Consideration should be given to training and up-skilling teachers and tutors so that they are able to better include and support learners from the four communities within mainstream education. This may include raising awareness of the social and cultural factors affecting learners as well as equipping teachers to make the curriculum more accessible and relevant to all pupils.

E.14 Despite a number of successful small-scale interventions ongoing amongst the four communities, there is no coherent strategy which brings together the key organisations working on behalf of the communities. This is of particular relevance for the Somali community who feel they lack a large strategic organisation to advocate and direct support on their behalf. Some feel there may be duplication or overlap of activity as a result.

Recommendation Three
The Welsh Assembly Government in developing its policies on minority ethnic achievement in education, skills training and lifelong learning should consider the views of all minority ethnic groups and encourage them to work in partnership at all levels – community level to government level.

E.15 There was significant support for community based learning, located in residential areas, to encourage learners who lack confidence in accessing mainstream provision. This method of learning is particularly attractive for women who traditionally remain in or near the home. Women often discussed the positive effects of informal learning with other learners from their own community.

Recommendation Four
There may be options to utilise community based settings to encourage people into education gradually. Where appropriate, options for a variety of different classes based on ability, gender and age should be considered.

E.16 There was some evidence from young people in the Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities that lack of practical support at home can hinder achievement at school. Parents can sometimes expect help at home and / or in family businesses from young people which may impinge on study time. Although many older participants from all communities with children

in school were positive about education and wanted them to do well, there was an indication that several factors affecting families may come into play which hinder participation and achievement of young people. These include lack of knowledge about the UK education system; previous negative experiences of school; lack of fluent English to attend parent's evenings / read reports and high expectations which children may not always be able to fulfil.

Recommendation Five
Schools and learning providers should be encouraged to consider how they communicate with parents. Promotion of successful mechanisms such as school liaison officers (see Section 4) which improve communication between schools, colleges and families could be considered.

E.17 Although the majority of providers collate some information on the ethnicity of learners, it is usually under the broad classifications. This does not provide detailed information on the various sub-groups. Data on the Somali community is hidden within figures for the Black African community for example. Consequently providers do not have detailed enough information to improve awareness-raising amongst staff and target interventions at the right learners.

Recommendation Six
Improved guidance on existing ethnic minority data collection: i.e. encouraging providers to collect according to *local* circumstances rather than solely against broad categories. Data on the Somali community is hidden within figures for the Black African community for example. Providers could collect more detail under the broad classifications which would provide more information and enable targeted awareness-raising on sub-groups within communities. Interventions could then be targeted effectively.

E.18 Breaking down the barriers to learning for women, especially from the Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities, is of particular importance for DCELLS as a significant proportion of women from these communities are economically inactive. Of the adult female participants consulted in this study, the vast majority were caring for children. Providing appropriate childcare either near to or based within community learning centres is vital for engaging with this group. It has also been found that women prefer to leave their children with crèche workers from the same community. Providing training to women to work in this sector would also be welcomed as undertaking voluntary work in the childcare sector was common amongst participants.

Recommendation Seven
The development of appropriate, local childcare to meet the needs of individuals in the four communities perhaps based within community education providers, or easily accessible community centres should be encouraged. Furthermore, facilitating access to training within the childcare / wider care sector for females from the four communities may support the development of new childcare facilities as well as raising employability skills.

E.19 There is some evidence that young people could benefit from specific support at transitional stages in their learning path. Muslim children moving from Primary to Secondary education may face increased demands on their time as they attend the Mosque in the evenings and may need additional study support. Young people moving from school to college can feel isolated if models of support are not consistent with what they are used to. There is also evidence that they make decisions based on what friends are doing. Ensuring that advice and guidance is promoted amongst friendship groups, as they move from school to college for example, is important.

Recommendation Eight
There may be a benefit in providing continuity of support for learners at transitional stages e.g. primary to secondary school and school to college / WBL. For example, this may involve home work / study clubs for those in the first two years of secondary school when external commitments may conflict with study time. Increasing targeted support and guidance amongst societies such as friendship groups as young people go to college or other learning providers could also be considered. This may alleviate isolation or lack of confidence in attending learning by themselves.

E.20 Findings from the focus groups highlighted that despite positive experiences at community based learning providers, information and support to progress to higher level courses and / or mainstream provision is not timely and comprehensive enough for participants to make that transition once their course of learning has finished.

Recommendation Nine
Improving progression from community learning to mainstream learning could be done by encouraging colleges and other mainstream learning providers to regularly communicate with community-based organisations to provide information on forthcoming courses. Encouraging organisations such as Jobcentre Plus to facilitate workshops with learners at community learning centres before they finish courses should also be considered.

E.21 A common discussion amongst participants and stakeholders was the lack of role models and positive stories for young people to gain motivation and inspiration from.   Many believe that mentoring provided by a young adult from their own community works very well for young people as well as specific youth projects, particularly with those from the Somali and African Caribbean communities.

Recommendation Ten
Mechanisms might be developed for promoting positive role models for young people so as to raise confidence and aspirations amongst the community.   Building on existing youth work and providing young people with mentors from their own community can support this process

1   INTRODUCTION

1.1   York Consulting has been commissioned by the Department for Education Culture and the Welsh Language (DCELLS) within the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) to undertake a research study into the barriers to learning amongst four selected communities.

1.2   These four selected communities are the Pakistani; Bangladeshi; Somali and African Caribbean communities in South Wales.

Research Brief

1.3   The specific aims of the research are to:

- understand the motivations and rationale for take up of different forms of learning opportunities by individuals in the four communities selected;

- explore the barriers, motivations and other reasons that may exist to prevent the take up of learning and training for these communities;

- explore the impact that training and learning has on individuals, including non-completers.

1.4   DCELLS are interested in the following specific objectives:

- **assess the level and nature of engagement** in different types of learning – Further Education (FE), Adult and Community Education (ACL), Work-based Learning (WBL) and Higher Education (HE). It is also of interest to explore the mode of learning: vocational/academic and engagement in Language, Literacy and Numeracy (LLN) and English for a Second or Other Language (ESOL) learning;

- **understand characteristics of learners**: qualification/skills levels, socio-economic status, parental educational levels;

- **understand barriers, motivations and aspirations** to access, participate and complete learning (and de-motivating factors);

- **understand attitudes and perceptions** of employment and the relationship of these to learning/training experiences and take up of learning/training with employment;

- **understand impact of barriers/motivations/aspirations** on learning routes, subject areas and employment;

- **explore engagement strategies** by providers and the role and quality of advice they provide;

- **compare** findings from the four communities with other communities in Wales and the UK.

Methodology

1.5   The main elements of the research methodology comprise:

- **desk review** – qualitative and quantitative analysis of existing literature and research concerning the four selected communities in both Wales and the rest of the UK;

- **20 focus groups** with learners and non-learners from the four communities;

- **one White control group** with White young people not in education, employment or training (NEET);

- up to **36 interviews with stakeholders** including learning providers, policy makers and community organisations.

Completed Fieldwork

1.6 All elements of the planned primary fieldwork were completed. This comprised:

- **18** focus groups with a total of **109** participants (average of 6 participants per group);

- **one** White control group with 7 participants;

- **29** interviews with stakeholders from a variety of learning providers, voluntary and community groups, and wider organisations.

1.7 The remainder of this report is set out as follows:

- **Section Two** highlights findings from the brief literature review and some of the key data from the quantitative analysis of statistics on the four communities;

- **Section Three** presents the key findings from the focus groups with participants from the four communities;

- In **Section Four** we discuss the key findings arising from the stakeholder consultations;

- In **Section Five** we discuss the similarities and differences for each of the four communities and summarise the key messages;

- **Section Six** presents our recommendations for addressing some of the issues arising from the research.

List of Abbreviations Used

1.8 The following abbreviations have been used throughout the report:

- Not in Education, Employment or Training (**NEET**);

- English for Speakers of Other Languages (**ESOL**);

- English as an Additional Language (**EAL**);

- Work-Based Learning (**WBL**).

Ethnic Minority Classifications

1.9 Although the term African-Caribbean is still in usage, many statistical and research documents use the term Black Caribbean. This term has been used within Section 2 where published data has been quoted.

2 STATISTICS AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Limitations to the Research

2.1 Due to the nature of available quantitative data sources, obtaining comprehensive and accurate data on the specific communities has not always been possible. Statistics available from the Welsh Assembly on post-16 participation are often only presented using the broad ethnic minority categories of Black, Asian, White and White Other. Clearly this prevents analysis of the sub-groups within these broad classifications.

2.2 This is a particular challenge for analysing data on the Somali community. Somalia is a country of origin rather than an ethnic classification. For this reason, data for the Somali community is always contained within the more widely used Black African classification. This limits our ability to draw conclusions from some of the statistical data regarding the Somali community alone.

Population and Characteristics[1]

2.3 The 2001 Census shows that people from ethnic minorities (those other than White British) make up 4% of the population of Wales, compared to 13% in England[2].

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[1] Figures taken from the Cardiff Young People's Partnership Self-Assessment Report January 2007: source Office for National Statistics Census 2001
[2] Commission for Racial Equality – Source: Office for National Statistics Census 2001.

2.4   The 2001 Census figures show the ethnic minority population to be concentrated in the South of the country. The table below shows the number and proportion of the four selected communities in the three main cities of Cardiff, Newport and Swansea. Of the four selected communities, the Pakistani community is the largest in Cardiff and Newport, closely followed by the Bangladeshi community.   Of the four selected communities living in Swansea, the Bangladeshi community is the largest.

Table 2.1

Population of the Four Selected Communities within South Wales					
	White (%)	Pakistani (%)	Bangladeshi (%)	Black Caribbean (%)	Black African (%)
National Average	**97.8**	**0.28**	**0.18**	**0.08**	**0.12**
Cardiff	91.5	1.39	0.83	0.43	0.71
Newport	95.1	1.42	0.63	0.30	0.17
Swansea	97.8	0.14	0.45	0.03	0.08

2.5   According to the 2001 Census figures a significant number of ethnic minority communities live in the South of Cardiff in Butetown, Riverside, Grangetown, Plasnewydd, Adamsdown and Cathays. **These areas are also amongst the most deprived in Wales – particularly Butetown, which is the most deprived area in Wales**[3].

Age

2.6   **Cardiff has a high proportion of young people**: 25.15% of Cardiff's population is aged 11–25 compared to 19.45% in the rest of South East Wales[4].

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[3] The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation Summary Report 2005, Welsh Assembly Government
[4] Cardiff Young people's Partnership Self–Assessment Report January 2007

2.7   Butetown has the highest proportion of people aged 10–24 from ethnic minority backgrounds, particularly from the Somali community[5].

2.8   Ethnic minority communities tend to have a younger age structure than that of the general White population. The mixed ethnic group has the youngest age structure with 45% of its population under 16. This is double that of the White population.   Following this, **39% of Bangladeshi**, **33% of Pakistani** and **27% of Black African** communities' population are aged under 16[6].   The Black Caribbean community has a high proportion of people aged between 16–24[7].

2.9   This young age structure indicates that the potential numbers of people from the four communities who can access learning and employment opportunities is set to increase. As such it is of paramount importance that barriers to participation in learning and the labour market are addressed to ensure members of the four communities are able to develop their skills as well as contribute fully to the Welsh economy.

Economic Activity[8]

2.10 The Office for National Statistics defines economic inactivity as those people of working age who do not satisfy the definitions of employment or unemployment. They are people not actively participating in the labour market who are unable or unwilling to start a paid job.   Examples of economically inactive people include students; people who have retired early; women looking after the family or home or those with a long term illness or disability.

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[5] Ibid
[6] Minority Ethnic Skills and Labour Market Participation, Welsh Assembly Government: DCELLS
[7] Statistical Focus on Ethnicity in Wales, 2004
[8] All figures under this heading are taken from Minority Ethnic Skills and Labour Market Participation, Welsh Assembly Government: DCELLS

2.11 The economic activity rate for **the White group** according to the 2001 Census was 76%. The lowest activity rates are experienced by the Bangladeshi community (53%), the Pakistani community (57%) and the Black African community (including Somali) (61%).

2.12 The economic activity rate for **Black African males** is lower at 75% than the national average for men overall (82%).

2.13 There is considerable economic inactivity amongst Bangladeshi and Pakistani females: **22% of Bangladeshi females** and **34% of Pakistani females** aged 16-24 are economically inactive.

2.14 **Bangladeshi males** have a higher than average economic activity rate than males in general. This perhaps counteracts the fact that more women from this community tend to run the household and care for the family and are economically inactive.

Employment[9]

2.15 Graduates from the **Pakistani and Bangladeshi** communities are two and half times more likely to be unemployed than their White counterparts.

2.16 **Black Caribbean females** aged between 16 and 24 have the highest unemployment rates at 29% – the overall rate for the general population is 11%. **Bangladeshi females** over 25 have the highest unemployment rate at 21% compared to 4% for the overall population.

2.17 **Black African males** aged 16-24 have the highest unemployment rate at 40% compared to 16% for the overall population. Black African graduates are more likely to be unemployed than White graduates.

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[9] Ibid

2.18 **Black Caribbean** males over 25 are amongst the groups with the highest unemployment rate.

2.19 Both **Pakistani males and females** are more likely to be self-employed (43% and 26% respectively) than the overall population for males (21%) and females (9%).

2.20 **Black Caribbean** females and **Bangladeshi** females from the 16-24 age group are more likely to work part-time than any other community.

Learning Participation and Success[10]

2.21 Data on participation rates, completion and success for Wales is not available for the four **specific communities** being researched for this study. Official data is presented using the groupings of White, Black, Asian and Other.

2.22 **Table 2.2** presents the participation figures in post-16 learning for the broad ethnic minority classifications in 2004/05.

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[10] All figures under this heading taken from: Ethnicity Statistics for the Post-16 Learning Sector in Wales October 2006, Sources: Post-16 PLASC and LLWR databases.

Table 2.2

Ethnic Minority Participation in Post–16 Learning in 2004 in Wales					
Type of Learning Institutions					
Ethnic Minority Group	Total Population (Census, 2001) (%)	Sixth-Forms (%)	Further Education Institutions (FEIs) (%)	Local Education Authorities (LEAs) (%)	Work–Based Learning (WBL) Providers (%)
White	97.9	95.7	96.2	97.6	98.4
Asian	1.1	2.2	1.9	1.3	0.6
Black	0.2	0.6	0.8	0.3	0.4
Mixed	0.6	0.9	0.5	0.5	0.5
Other	0.2	0.6	0.6	0.3	0.2
Total Ethnic Minority Communities (%)	**2.1**	**4.3**	**3.8**	**2.4**	**1.6**

2.23 It is likely that the proportion of ethnic minorities residing in Wales in 2004 was higher than the Census figures collated in 2001. However percentages for participation in Sixth-Forms, FEIs and LEAs broadly match the ethnic minority population in Wales. Learners from the ethnic minority groups are somewhat **under-represented** on work-based learning programmes.

2.24 **Tables 2.3-2.6** show participation in the four types of learning by ethnicity and age. Table 2.3 shows the participation in sixth-forms in 2005. It highlights there was a particularly high proportion of ethnic minority learners aged over 19 in Sixth-forms. This was attributed to the fact the figure was based on a small number of learners, many of whom were thought to be asylum seekers or immigrants.[11]

Table 2.3

Learners at Sixth-Forms by Ethnicity and Age, 2005			
Age/Ethnicity	19 and Under (%)	20-29 (%)	30 and Over (%)
White	95.7	80.7	90.9
Asian	2.0	8.8	0.0
Black	0.7	3.8	9.1
Mixed	1.0	2.1	0.0
Other	0.6	4.6	0.0
Total Ethnic Minority Population	**4.3**	**19.3**	**9.1**

2.25 The largest number of ethnic minority communities learning at FEIs and Local Education Authorities are within the 20-29 age group. The figures show that the likelihood of learning in one of these providers diminishes after 30 years old. For all age groups those from the Asian community form the largest group within these two types of learning provider.

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[11] Ethnicity Statistics for the Post-16 Learning Sector in Wales, October 2006, Welsh Assembly Government

Table 2.4

Learners at Further Education Institutions by Ethnicity and Age			
Age/Ethnicity	19 and Under (%)	20–29 (%)	30 and Over (%)
White	96.1	93.8	97.0
Asian	1.8	3.1	1.5
Black	0.7	1.4	0.7
Mixed	0.9	0.7	0.3
Other	0.4	1.1	0.5
Total Ethnic Minority Population	**3.9**	**6.2**	**3.0**

Table 2.5

Learners at Local Education Authorities by Ethnicity and Age			
Age/Ethnicity	19 and Under (%)	20–29 (%)	30 and Over (%)
White	96.1	94.6	98.0
Asian	2.1	3.0	1.0
Black	0.3	0.5	0.3
Mixed	0.8	1.1	0.4
Other	0.7	0.9	0.3
Total Ethnic Minority Population	**3.9**	**5.4**	**2.0**

2.26 Although the proportions of ethnic minority communities based at WBL providers are small, those aged between 20 – 29 are more likely to participate in this mode of learning.

Table 2.6

Learners at Work Based Learning Providers by Ethnicity and Age, 2005			
Age/Ethnicity	19 and Under (%)	20–29 (%)	30 and Over (%)
White	98.6	98.4	97.9
Asian	0.4	0.6	0.9
Black	0.4	0.4	0.6
Mixed	0.6	0.4	0.3
Other	0.0	0.1	0.4
Total Ethnic Minority Population	**1.4**	**1.6**	**2.1**

2.27 The average completion rate for all learners in FE in 2002/03 was **84%**. The average completion rate for learners from the Asian communities is **80%**. Learners from the **Black** community have the lowest completion rate at **77%**.

Achievement and Attainment in Wales

2.28 The average attainment rate for learners at FEIs was **60%** in 2002/03. Attainment amongst the broad ethnic minority groups was lower: **48%** for Asian learners and **40%** for learners from the Black community[12].

2.29 There is evidence to suggest that barriers within learning can start at a young age for these four communities highlighted by the levels of attainment at KS4 (GCSE). On average Black and Asian pupils start secondary school from a lower attainment level than other groups[13].

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[12] Ethnicity Statistics for the Post-16 Learning Sector in Wales October 2006, Source: 2002/03 Full Year Individualised Student Record (ISR).
[13] The Dynamics of Secondary School Attainment of Minority Ethnic Students in Wales October 2006

2.30 Furthermore, whilst students from Chinese, Asian Other, Indian, Other and White Other ethnicities out-perform White British students, those from Black African, Black Caribbean, Pakistani or Bangladeshi communities **achieve lower scores** than White British students[14].

Factors affecting Participation in Learning, Training and/or Employment: Literature Review

2.31 Wider UK literature reviewed as part of this study has highlighted some key messages relating to participation and achievement in learning and employment for the four selected communities. Research concerning White, NEET young people has also been studied. The relevant findings have been presented below.

Pakistani and Bangladeshi Communities

2.32 The Ethnic Minority Task Force 2004 highlighted that the Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities are less likely to have used childcare in the last year than Black Caribbean women (56% compared to 76%).

2.33 Over three-quarters of Bangladeshi women over the age of 25 do not speak fluent English[15].

2.34 Pakistani and Bangladeshi females in Wales are the most likely to attribute their low economic activity rate to domestic reasons/looking after the home[16].

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[14] The Dynamics of Secondary School Attainment of Minority Ethnic Students in Wales October 2006

[15] Minority Ethnic Skills and Labour Market Participation, Welsh Assembly Government, source: UK Strategy Report 2004

[16] Minority Ethnic Skills and Labour Market Participation, Welsh Assembly Government

2.35 The Minority Ethnic Skills and Labour Market Participation (WAG) report discusses findings by Clark and Drinkwater (2005) which states that Pakistani and Bangladeshi females have significantly lower levels of employment, even after controlling for human capital and religious differences, which result in different occupational paths.

2.36 Research undertaken by Arad Consulting with BME communities in South Wales[17] found evidence to suggest that parental pressure amongst Bangladeshi families to follow particular career paths was common, which may restrict wider opportunities.

2.37 Research undertaken by the University of Sunderland[18] on home school relations in the North East found that many Bangladeshi parents did not play a direct role in their child's education and generally did not see the need to visit the school or attend parents' evenings, indicating that if they thought there was a problem they would hear about it via the community. Many saw their role as providing a supportive home and family background and as giving encouragement.

2.38 The Equal Opportunities Commission[19] found evidence of discrimination and disadvantage due to assumptions about women from particular ethnic backgrounds. One-in-eight young Pakistani women employees are often asked about their plans for marriage or children at interview compared to one-in-thirty young British White women. Women in this research were more likely than White women to rate flexible working as important in their choice of employment.

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[17] Extending Entitlement – Researching and Developing Knowledge on Harder to Reach Young People and their Access to Entitlements, Arad Consulting.
[18] A Discussion of Home School Relations with Particular Reference to Bangladeshi and Pakistani Parents, Gill Crozier and Jane Davies, University of Sunderland, 2005.
[19] Moving on Up? Bangladeshi, Pakistani and Black Caribbean women at work, Equal Opportunities Commsion.

Somali Community

2.39 Replan-funded research[20] found that the Somali community had a high level of illiteracy and significant linguistic and cultural barriers. It also found that the community had inadequate access to information on education, training, employment and enterprise opportunities.

2.40 Somali residents in Sheffield[21] indicated their barriers to obtaining work included not having the necessary qualifications or skills, to highlight their lack of fluency in English and some prejudice on the part of employers. The main reasons given by those not interested in pursuing education was the concern it would not help in obtaining work, lack of time or that spoken English was not good enough. Women in particular were more likely to state they would like to receive education at Somali centres.

2.41 Coleg Glan Hafren[22] in Cardiff found that Somali pupils are reported to be noisy and have more disruptive behaviour than other groups. They also cite a survey undertaken by the Somali Youth Association which showed that Somali pupils feel that they are 'picked on' by teachers more than other pupils.

2.42 The college also reported that Somali students on ESOL courses experience poorer health than other students and as a result have absences for health appointments. They may not always qualify for a bus pass and therefore may not walk to college in bad weather. Absences also tend to occur due to childcare arrangements breaking down.

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[20] The Planning Exchange A581, July / August 1996

[21] The Education, Training and Employment Needs of the Somali community, Policy Research Institute

[22] An investigation into the under-achievement of Specific Ethnic Minority Groups in Education and Training in a Further Education College, Coleg Glan Hafren, 2006

African-Caribbean Community

2.43 A report for DfES[23] has suggested that Black Caribbean pupils are routinely punished more harshly, praised less and told off more in English schools. They are three times more likely to be permanently excluded than White young people. The research suggested this could either be attributed to unwitting racial discrimination or, that pupils especially boys, can subject to outside influences and cultural stereotypes which cause them to behave more aggressively in school.

NEET Young People

2.44 This research study incorporated a White control group to compare reasons for non-participation amongst the wider NEET group and those from the four selected communities. Wider literature has identified reasons for young people becoming NEET as:

- negative attitudes towards school: boredom, poor relationships with teachers and anti-school cultures[24];

- low levels of aspirations and little motivation[25];

- curriculum which fails to engage and motivate young people who disengage completely and the complexity of qualifications and vocational routes available to young people which can be daunting and difficult to navigate[26];

- having a health problem or a disability[27];

- not having at least one parent in full-time employment[28].

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[23] Getting it. Getting it Right, Priority Review, Exclusion of Black Pupils, September 2006.
[24] Preventing and Re-engaging Young People NEET in London, Research as Evidence, 2007
[25] Ibid
[26] Ibid
[27] Youth Cohort Study: Education, Training and Employment of 16-18 year olds in England, DfES

3 FOCUS GROUPS: KEY FINDINGS

3.1 The areas of discussion in each focus group varied depending on age, community background and socio-economic situation of those participating. This section presents the key findings from the focus groups and is structured in the following way:

- limitations to the research;

- focus group composition;

- history and contextual issues for each selected community;

- key messages highlighted from **each of the four** communities presented under the main headings of:

  - social and cultural barriers affecting participation in learning and training;

  - attitudes towards employment;

  - decision-making factors: motivations, influences and success / completion factors;

- key messages from all four communities for:

  - preferred learning routes and subject areas;

  - experiences and perceptions on available information; support and guidance;

- comparative findings from the White control group.

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[28] Ibid

Limitations to the Research

3.2 There were some challenges in recruiting for the focus groups. Reaching groups of learners and non-learners from particular community groups can be difficult, especially if they do not perceive any personal benefits. The following key issues were raised by several of the organisations contacted:

- there is some evidence of 'research fatigue', both on the part of stakeholders within organisations and potential participants. Several organisations cited that participants have felt disappointed at the lack of feedback after taking part in previous research or consultation i.e. overall findings have not been reported back to them and / or they have not seen positive changes or increased opportunities or support within their communities in recent years. **Participants in this research were fully informed of the objectives and rationale**; informed of when and where the **final report is to be published** and were invited to the **final presentation** of the findings and recommendations. Questions and comments on the findings were invited from participants.

- apprehension at targeting particular learners from selected communities who may already feel vulnerable. A few providers were cautious about approaching individuals to identify their community background and request participation;

- in some instances providers are taking measures to provide extra support to BME learners and were unwilling to ask them to take more time out of their day to participate in a focus group.

White Control Group

3.3 The rationale for control groups is to enable researchers to make some comparisons with the findings from the main focus groups and therefore identify if key issues are specific to the selected target groups or common to the wider population.

3.4 Ideally a control group would have been undertaken for every type of focus group carried out with the four selected communities. A more pragmatic approach was adopted however and **one** White control group was undertaken. This group mirrored one target group from the selected communities: i.e. young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) – a group of particular interest for this research. This was thought to be the most appropriate method rather than aiming to include a very mixed group which would yield little confidence in the findings.

3.5 The White control group was recruited using the assistance from a voluntary organisation based in Cardiff. This organisation works with young people from all backgrounds and ethnicities who are disengaged or have been excluded from school. Many of their client group are moving in and out of 'NEET' status. Seven young people attended the group. Clearly this is not a large enough number to be able to compare with confidence. It does however offer an insight into the issues which can affect young people, regardless of ethnicity.

Focus Group Composition

3.6 **Table 3.1** details the composition of the 18 completed focus groups by gender, age range and community background. Consultations with a range of participants from all four community backgrounds and ages have been achieved. Overall more males (62%) than females (38%) were consulted. The Somali community was the largest group consulted (37%), closely followed by the Bangladeshi community (33%). The African Caribbean community proved the most difficult to recruit from (12%).

3.7 It is important to note that the figures overall are quite small, particularly when sub analysis of community background, age ranges or gender is taken into account. This is particularly the case for the **African Caribbean** community. Where particular issues or key messages were raised by the *majority* of participants this has been highlighted. However some caution must be undertaken when interpreting the findings as in some instances they are not necessarily representative of the whole community.

Table 3.1

Focus Group Composition												
Focus Group	M	F	Bangladeshi	Pakistani	African Caribbean	Somali	11–14	15–18	19–24	25–49	50+	Total
Focus Group 1	8	–	8	–	–	–	–	–	–	8	–	8
Focus Group 2	–	4	1	3	–	–	–	–	1	3	–	4
Focus Group 3	2	–	–	–	–	2	–	–	–	–	25	2
Focus Group 4	11	–	–	–	–	11	–	–	–	11	–	11
Focus Group 5	–	3	–	–	–	3	–	2	1	–	–	3
Focus Group 6	3	2	–	–	–	5	–	–	1	4	–	5
Focus Group 7	–	8	4	3	–	1	–	–	–	8	–	8
Focus Group 8	4	–	–	4	–	–	–	–	2	2	–	4
Focus Group 9	7	6	13	–	–	–	–	13	–	–	–	13
Focus Group 10	5	–	–	–	5	–	–	–	2	3	–	5
Focus Group 11	10	–	–	–	–	10	–	3	3	4	–	10
Focus Group 12	4	–	2	1	–	1	–	4	–	–	–	4
Focus Group 13	3	1	2	–	2	–	–	4	–	–	–	4
Focus Group 14	–	4	–	–	4	–	–	4	–	–	–	4
Focus Group 15	3	2	2	2	–	–	5	–	–	–	–	5
Focus Group 16	2	5	4	3	–	1	7	–	–	–	–	7
Focus Group 17	3	1	–	–	1	3	–	–	4	–	–	4

Focus Group Composition												
Focus Group	M	F	Bangladeshi	Pakistani	African Caribbean	Somali	11–14	15–18	19–24	25–49	50+	Total
Focus Group 18	4	4	–	4	1	3	–	8	–	–	–	8
Total	69	40	36	20	13	40	12	37	17	40	2	109
Focus Group 19 (White group)	5	2	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	–	7	–	–	–	7
Total	73	42	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	116

3.8 **Table 3.2** presents the main current activity for the participants. 38% were in mainstream education i.e. school, college or university. 20% classed themselves as not in education, employment or training (NEET); 17% were in employment and another 17% in community-based education or learning.

Table 3.2

Focus Group Participants' Main Activity	
Type of Organisation	Number of Stakeholders
In employment	18
Mainstream education (school, college, university)	41
Voluntary work	2
Community – based learning	18
Not in education, employment or training	22
Work-based learning	8
Total	109

History and Contextual Issues

3.9 It is important to place the findings of this research with the history and background of each community. The text boxes below provide a snapshot for each of the four selected communities.

Table 3.3

History and Context
Somali Community[29]
• members of the Somali community originally made links with Britain as a result of the booming coal industry.   The area of Aden across from Somalia was a major coal bunker. As early as 1910 Somalis were employed to work on the steam ships bringing the coal from Aden to various British ports, including Cardiff.   These steam ships also offered the opportunity to trade livestock – Somalia's main export. There was little real settlement of Somali sailors until the two World Wars when Somalis became increasingly engaged in the Merchant navy and supporting the military; • Somalia has experienced varying colonial influences; the French in the north (including Djibouti), British Somaliland and Italian colonies in the south.   Somalia is made up of different tribes: historically the north of the country has been nomadic, though has shifted towards traditional settlements over time.   The southern part of the country has a different environment with more fertile land and as a result has been home to settlements; • Somalis from the main ports of Cardiff, London, South Shields and Liverpool continued to be employed in the navy following the war. Although Sailors would be away for a long time, many would return to their original port. Some Somalis bought a house and their families began to join them.   It wasn't until the late 60s however that the first generation of Somalis were born in the UK.   Historically there have been some challenges for women from Somali families to gain work in the UK due to family life and the nomadic nature of life in Somalia which required more manual / semi-skilled work;

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[29] '*The Somali Community in the UK, What We Know and How We Know It'* Information Centre about Asylum Seekers and Refugees in the UK (ICAR) and from consultation with Development Trusts Association Wales

History and Context
• after civil war in Somalia broke out in the late 80s, families and friends fleeing the war joined Cardiff's Somali residents. Somali residents in the UK were keen to help family members suffering the trauma of war. Many Somalis have continued to join this longstanding community over the last two decades.   The population in 1991 was thought to be around 1000 but increased dramatically following those seeking asylum with families arriving in Cardiff.   Accurate statistical information is not available for the Somali population in Cardiff, but one source suggests a population of 7,000 – 8000 in South Wales, mainly located in Cardiff and Newport [Harris 2004];   • Somalis have brought a good deal of skills, educational knowledge and expertise to Cardiff. Those with a good educational background and with a strong drive have done extremely well in obtaining employment and setting up businesses.   Culturally Somalis can shy away from support and some sections of the community are deeply affected by the civil war. This can manifest itself in different ways. Some sections of the community (not all) are struggling to access learning, training and employment opportunities;   • the vast majority of Somalis are Muslim.
Pakistani Community [30]
• Pakistan was created in 1947 by the partition of the Indian subcontinent and, until 1971, included East Pakistan – the territory that is now Bangladesh;   • mass migration from Pakistan began in earnest in the 1960s and was characterised by single male migrants of working age seeking employment. In particular, the creation of the Mangla Dam in north-west Pakistan led to the displacement of 100,000 people in Pakistan and

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[30] Commission for Racial Equality
http://www.cre.gov.uk/diversity/ethnicity/pakistani.html

History and Context

many villagers used the compensation money to travel to Britain to find work. Many Pakistani migrants took work in the textile industries;

- in 2001 40 per cent of the UK Pakistani population was born in Pakistan and 55 per cent were born in the UK indicating much of the growth in this community group has been the result of births rather than immigration;

- according to the 2001 Census the Pakistani population has a youthful age profile with 35 per cent under the age of 16 and only four per cent aged over 65. The gender distribution for Pakistanis up to the age of 65 is typical of the population as a whole, with an even distribution between genders, but after 65 there are more men than women (55 per cent compared with 45 per cent). This may be a reflection of spousal age differences, with men tending to be older than their wives;

- the Pakistani community in South Wales is very diverse with some originating from very prosperous areas and others coming from areas of rural farmland;

- the vast majority of the Pakistani community (92%) are Muslim.

Bangladeshi Community[31]

- Bangladesh was formed in 1971 from an area that since 1947 had been East Pakistan. Before partition, what is now Bangladesh had been part of the Indian region of Bengal;

- although some migration occurred before 1960, the first migration from Bangladesh began in the mid-1960s and mainly consisted of working age men. The majority came from the rural area of Sylhet in the North

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[31] Commission for Racial Equality
http://www.cre.gov.uk/diversity/ethnicity/bangladeshi.html

History and Context
East of the country, and today many Bangladeshis in Britain, including South Wales, still speak a distinct Sylheti dialect;

- the Bangladeshi population is one the youngest in Britain with 38 per cent aged under 16 and only 3 per cent aged over 65. The median age for Bangladeshis in Britain is 21, the lowest for any ethnicity with the exception of Mixed, which reflects a range of factors including the high proportion of women of childbearing age, their recent immigration to Britain and a preference for larger families;

- there is also a marked disparity between the numbers of men and women at older ages, with men out numbering women two-to-one at age 65 and above. This imbalance could be due to the tendency for men to marry women younger than themselves and to emigrate before their families;

- first male migrants tended to wait longer than their Pakistani and Indian counterparts before bringing their families to the UK and it was not until the 1980s that there was rapid expansion in the population as wives and dependants began to join their husbands in Britain;

- similar to the Pakistani community, the vast majority of the Bangladeshi community (92%) are Muslim.

Black-Caribbean Community[32]

- much of the Black Caribbean population is disseminated from people whose ancestors in the eighteenth century were taken as slaves from West Africa to British colonies in the West Indies;

- today the main country of birth for the Black Caribbean population is

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[32]Commission for Racial Equality
http://www.cre.gov.uk/diversity/ethnicity/blackcaribbean.html

History and Context

England (57 per cent) and Jamaica (23 per cent), with 3 per cent born in Barbados and roughly 2 per cent each from Trinidad, Tobago, Guyana, Grenada, and small numbers born in other countries, including countries outside the British Commonwealth, such as Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic and Cuba;

- after the Second World War a number of Caribbean men who had served in the armed forces stayed in Britain. Large scale migration from the Caribbean started in the 1950s. The post war movement from the former British West Indies to Britain is most often linked to the arrival of 417 Jamaicans on the 'Empire Windrush' in 1948. By 1951 there were about 17,000 people born in the Caribbean living in Britain;

- unusually the Black Caribbean population has a greater number of women than men in the working age population (54%) which could be the consequence of an undercount of men. In this respect more Black Caribbean females of working age are likely to be in professional or managerial occupational groups (30% compared to 20%);

- the Black Caribbean population has a similar religious profile to the White British population with 74% classed as Christian and 11% with no religion. Other religious affiliations among the community include Muslim, Rastafarian and Jehovah's Witness.

Social and Cultural Barriers to Participation in Learning and Training

Somali Community

3.10 Specific issues surrounding learning and training take-up highlighted by a significant number of Somali participants include:

- **language** – lack of fluent English skills affects the older members of the community more but consequently affects the younger generation too as parents struggle to support their children's education. Often participants cite that a lack of fluency acts as a barrier to undertaking more in-depth learning or compete for jobs via interviews / CV writing;

- **low expectations** originating from school were articulated by some participants: lack of understanding on the part of teachers resulting in low aspirations:

  - *"The problems for our community start with the young people in Year 7 – teachers stereotype them. They don't encourage them and have their own assumptions and prejudices"*;

- **lack of positive role models** – whilst an issue of concern for the older members of the community who feel this adversely affects the young people, discussions that morale in general amongst all Somali community members is low, have been common;

- **lack of sufficient, established community organisations** – despite being one of the oldest communities in Cardiff, previous generations of Somali seamen did not always place substantial roots in the area due to the transient nature of their work. As a result the community lacks distinct, long standing organisations that can advocate and provide strategic direction for the whole community:

  – *"We lack external policies to help our community"*;

- **social networks and visible integration in mainstream society** – culturally the Somali community does not always socialise in the same way as Western societies, preferring to use family as their social network:

  – *"We don't drink, go to pubs or socialise which makes us more isolated. Our social networks are limited. It means that we don't hear about jobs or courses or make contacts outside out own community"*;

- **cultural attitudes towards women** – some members of the Somali community prefer male teachers or believe that women should not be undertaking learning or employment.   An emphasis on girls undertaking family/household duties is prevalent:

  – *"My friend said to me, when I get married I expect my wife to stay in – I wont let her out of the door"*;

  – *"I did apply to go to college and had a place to do a GNVQ in IT. However I had to go to Somalia to look after my Grandma. By the time I got back it was too late to start the course"*.

Pakistani Community

3.11 Barriers to learning and training take-up affecting the Pakistani community include:

- **language** – as with the Somali community, many individuals from the Pakistani community can speak and understand English but suffer when it comes to CV writing or competing at interviews which requires a *much higher* level of English.   Lack of literacy in their first language is particularly a problem. Members of the community can grow up in families with no history of education or literacy in the family:

  – *"When my son was young 12/13, he was embarrassed that I was learning and could read and write. He wanted me to be like other mums who were illiterate because he though that was normal. Now he's 18 he's realised its good thing"*;

- **isolation** – some lack of social networks resulting in low confidence and few opportunities to find out about learning courses.   This particularly affects women who are expected to remain in the house and look after the home and family. Some women have come from Pakistan to live in Wales for an arranged marriage and therefore lack of language skills and friends compounds the isolation:

  – *"I had been stuck in the house with no socialising or meeting people. I was extremely isolated. I asked about doing some learning but nobody knew – even those who had been here 20 years. I eventually found out about this organisation through speaking to someone"*;

- **lack of appropriate childcare,** available with or near to community learning providers:

  – *"If there were more crèches run by ethnic minority women in the locality it would help. Some women don't want to leave their kids with strangers or those they can't identify with"*;

- **lack of confidence in day-to-day living** if people have not been in the country for long:

  – *"I've done my Level 1 in English here but would like to continue Level 2 at College. I don't know how to get the bus"*;

- **understanding of the education system** – some families do not understand the education system and do not challenge what happens to young people in school. Reasons for this appear to relate to culture as well as language difficulties: parents are not used to challenging schools. Despite valuing education, parents can struggle to support and encourage their children in a manner which promotes achievement. Often they are reliant on their children to let them know what is happening:

  – *"We are at a disadvantage because we don't know the education system"*;

- **perception that mainstream providers are not for them**:

  – *"Places like colleges are White-dominated, people have a different lifestyle and some people fear this"*;

- **poverty** – some families can be large and have low incomes. Overcrowding in poor housing does occur and does not encourage older teenagers to study. Pakistani first generation migrants are often from rural farmland in Pakistan and therefore can have a history of poverty and poor education. This tended to be raised by the older participants speaking on behalf of their community;

- **family orientated culture and gender-based roles** – e.g. helping at home for females and in the family business for males:

  – *"My mum likes it if I stay at home. She doesn't like me going out"*;

- in some instances **Muslim culture** *may* present challenges for children to study effectively:

  – *"I used to go to the Mosque every day and it was very hectic. Its better to go to the Mosque at weekends and read the Koran during the week"*;

- others described what they thought would be a better structure to their day:

  - *"We would prefer to go to school in the morning and then have the afternoon to do whatever we want"*;

  - *"I spent all of year 6 in Pakistan. I got more homework but I enjoyed it more because it was school in the morning and then I had all afternoon to play football and cricket"*;

- interestingly, however, it seems to be the younger year groups (year 6 and 7) who may feel more pressure of Muslim culture on their learning. Those in years 8 and 9 felt they had more time now they were older and religious activities did not present a barrier:

  - *"Now we are older we only have to go the Mosque if we want to. We can do it ourselves now – we don't need to be taught. We only go to the Mosque if we need to or want to"*;

  - *"It's just a part of life; you don't think about it, just like you have to eat, you have to pray"*;

- in some sections of the community there is some **mistrust** of the liberalisation of women. Female participants did discuss specific cultural and religious barriers relating to the Muslim way of life. They highlighted that some Muslim families (not all), may be cautious of females mixing with males in college or having a freer lifestyle than they would like:

  - *"My husband isn't happy I come here and undertake learning"* (at which point another interjected, joking, that she shouldn't listen to him …);

  - *"Some women (and consequently their partners) prefer single sex classes"*.

Bangladeshi Community

- **language**: many older members of the community do not have good literacy skills in their own language. Some Bangladeshi families may speak the dialect of Sylheti which has no written form. This presents a huge barrier for learning English and has implications for children who do not receive help at home:

  - *"Although I can speak English enough to live day to day, it's not good enough for doing interviews or doing a mainstream course"*;

- **gender roles for boys and girls within families**: a common discussion was how girls are out-performing boys in school (as with the White population). Often people felt this was because parents tend to be a lot stricter with girls, keeping them in the house. Consequently girls study more and have more time for homework. Often parents expect help from boys in the family business which can impact on time available for studying;

- **poverty** – the history of migration for this community is that it was the poorer families from areas with little economic growth in Bangladesh who moved to the UK. First generation migrants may not have had the opportunity for a full education, which can have a lasting impact on the next generation. Often older teenagers have to help with siblings or do not have their own room to study due to overcrowding:

  - *"Poverty is a factor. If we had been rich when we were in Bangladesh we would never have come. Families came here with nothing and have to try and make a better life for themselves. My parents did try and instil in us to try and get an education. I know I have to try and help my daughter"*;

- **lack of positive role models** – there is a sense from participants that they worry about the future of their young people in particular:

  - *"The people they look up to are rap artists, gangsters, etc. They don't aspire to be much else and want flash cars and lots of money"*;

- **parental support** – this was a frequent topic of debate as older participants remembered little input from their parents who worked hard to earn money and thus had little time to attend parents' evenings or help with homework. One or two younger members of the community, whilst citing that parents did attend parents' evenings, explained they were sometimes expected to work in family businesses in their spare time:

    – *"I have to work in the restaurant Friday and Saturday nights. Sometimes other evenings too … this can make it more difficult to study"*;

- **mistrust of providers** where the sexes have freedom to mix – as with the Pakistani community, some members of the Bangladeshi community can be wary of allowing young people the freedom to learn with the opposite sex.

African Caribbean Community

3.12 A small number of African Caribbean participants were consulted in this study and as such there is limited evidence for some of the discussion areas. This community is the most integrated of all four communities which may mean that barriers to learning are not quite as easily identified as they can be for the other communities. More information on the potential barriers and issues facing this community is presented in **Section Four** within the stakeholder consultations.

3.13 Nevertheless discussions with participants from the African Caribbean community did highlight some issues of pertinence to this community.

- **social restrictions**: there was some indication that members of this community feel they have to fight to do something they want to do, suggesting they can suffer from racial stereotyping:

– *"The main challenge is breaking away from the social barriers and restrictions. The differences between home countries and here are so big that it becomes an overwhelming change that some people find it difficult to get over"*;

– *"Social barriers can either hinder you or they can make you stronger"*.

3.14 One young person from this community reported unprompted that she had not felt there to be any challenges, barriers or racial discrimination relating to her learning due to her ethnicity. She attributed this to the fact the college was so diverse.

Impact on Attitudes towards Employment

3.15 The vast majority of participants from the represented communities had a positive attitude towards working or have wanted to obtain employment on arrival in Wales or after participation in a course of learning. However there is evidence of frustration surrounding obtaining employment, based on personal experiences.

Somali Community

3.16 Perceived barriers and issues raised by Somali participants include:

- frustration with **ESOL provision**: the time available for learning English to the required standard to be able to compete for jobs is not enough:

  – *"There's just not enough time to learn English. I'm on an ESOL course which only lasts three months during which time you can still claim benefits. However, after that we're expected to get to the required standard for doing interviews. We end up doing security jobs and cleaning"*.

- frustration at the **Cardiff Bay regeneration**. This was raised in more than one focus group, particularly by the older members of the community who feel their community remains marginalised and has not seen the benefits of this development. Members of the community believed more jobs should have been available for the construction work, but unemployment in the community is still high:

  – *"Cardiff Bay is such a prosperous area now but Butetown got nothing. There are no ethnic minority employees in businesses in the Bay. Promises were made and not kept. Resources, such as, health clinics have been removed from Butetown and put elsewhere to benefit the Bay"*;

- There is a distinct perception that **equality in the job market does not exist**. Many participants have experienced **discrimination** when competing for jobs:

  – *"I've applied for lots of things but had rejections from everyone. They always tell me that someone higher qualified got the job but somehow I don't believe them"*;

  – *"There's definitely discrimination. There are lots of Somali taxi-drivers with degree qualifications but they can't get anything else. They never intended to be a taxi-driver"*;

  – *"I was working in a petrol station for four years then a management position came up but they sent someone else. I had to train them which was frustrating – I was more than qualified to get the job myself but they didn't want to give it to me"*;

  – *"When I left school I was quite excited about the thought of getting a job. I was friends with a Welsh girl and she got a job really easily even though we were the same when we did the online assessments and stuff. I started to wonder if it was my name or what I look like"*;

– *"Some people from the Somali community went for jobs but the East European people got them. I think they are looking at colour of skin"*;

3.17 In particular there is some frustration at the difficulty in obtaining jobs or training from some members of the community, even when they hold formal, high level qualifications:

• *"I only got my job because I had worked with the guy before and he knew me. Often we get jobs through people we know. Competing for jobs equally in the traditional method is extremely difficult"*;

• *"The thing is I'm trained in operating machinery but I need the training certificate from the UK to be able to do it here. It would cost me £2500 to get it and I don't have the money"*;

• *"I know Somali taxi-drivers with degrees"*.

3.18 Lack of positive employment stories and experiences was cited as a problem within all communities. Somali participants discussed how if those with good qualifications struggle to find work then it impacts on the morale of others in the community and affects the aspirations of all.

3.19 There was a strong sense from several unemployed Somali participants that the Government could do more to help people into jobs and be more pro-active to solve the problem. Indeed some participants hoped this research would mean an increase in job opportunities for them:

• *"We need more positive action"*;

• *"The Government should make Jobcentre Plus and other organisations put people who have no jobs into work placements"*.

Pakistani Community

3.20 Attitudes towards employment may be shaped by learning environments and experiences as well as gender roles within a community. Several females from the Pakistani community discussed wanting to work in the crèche they had used while on a course or become a tutor at a centre similar to one they had used but lacked the confidence or guidance to progress their skills. Others may be reluctant to move out of their comfort zone, especially if work is not a priority for them. Raising confidence and providing opportunities to work with their own community for those who want to, is of particular importance for women gaining access to the labour market:

- *"Childcare is another barrier. If there were more crèches run by ethnic minority women in the locality it would help. Some women don't want to leave their kids with strangers or those they can't identify with. Also it's work that young women in our community would like to do so it would help them get experience too".*

3.21 Sometimes women in the focus groups did not always relate their learning or voluntary work to employment prospects but viewed their learning as a means of being able to help their children more or gain confidence to reduce their isolation:

- *"I volunteer in the crèche here. I lived in England for a few years without doing any learning though this was mainly because my children were young. However I think there are more opportunities in Cardiff and I found out about the community centre via word of mouth. It's really improved my confidence".*

3.22 Lack of equal access to the labour market is also of concern for the Pakistani community, as is proper recognition of overseas qualifications and experience:

- *"My sister is a gynaecologist and is really good. She has a lot of experience and is well-respected. Although her degree is recognised here she has really struggled to find someone to take her on";*

- *"I came to the UK to look for work. Although I had a lot of work experience they wouldn't accept it because it wasn't in the UK. There are far too many set forms – there should be more opportunity for people to meet business people / directors to give them a chance to persuade them for a work placement / job etc. We need more networking opportunities";*

- *"I've applied for lots of apprenticeships and handed in my CV to about 25 shops in town but heard nothing. I think there is some racism – I think they just look at your name and decide to chuck it out or not".*

3.23 Self-employment is a characteristic of this community. It is not clear how much participants gravitate towards self-employment to avoid disadvantage in the labour market or because this community has a long standing tradition of running small businesses. Several of the Pakistani males had their own businesses and the young people often stated their future aspirations were to do something 'in business'. There were often comments that parents can have high expectations of young people in terms of striving for highly qualified, professional jobs but that where this isn't achieved, there is an expectation to earn money straight away, often in a family business:

- *"There are high expectations in the Pakistani community generally. Often parents want you to be a doctor or lawyer and if you can't do that they tell you to do some unskilled work in a restaurant. There's no in– between".*

3.24 Conversely other participants indicated that sometimes guidance from parents / community did not always relate learning to better employment prospects but focused on personal development:

- *"My parents don't put pressure on me, they want me to achieve but want me to have a good name, be a good person";*

- *"My daughter is making her own way. I just want her to be a good person".*

3.25 In this respect attitudes towards employment amongst males have tended to focus on supporting the family to a greater extent than females. Female participants often spoke of learning and employment as a means of alleviating social isolation and helping their children with homework.

3.26 Younger people in the community can be aware of the need for a good education and that issues of secure employment affect the whole population. There was some sense that lack of the right information in the right places may put the Pakistani community at a greater disadvantage:

- *"I think self-employment is on the increase for a lot of people – not just the Pakistani community. Young people are more aware of the disposable nature of the workforce and therefore want their own businesses. The difficulty for the Pakistani community is obtaining the right information – there is no base for the community. Even signs in the Mosque would help. Grass-roots organisations need to be supporting us".*

3.27 Lack of confidence or identification with wider society can also be an issue for this community:

- *"I know people who are reasonably well-educated but who won't apply for jobs in the civil service and places like the Welsh Assembly. People lack confidence and this has a wider impact on the community";*

- *"I have a Bachelor of Arts from Pakistan and have done a bit of teaching. However people laughed at my accent and I've lost my confidence".*

Bangladeshi Community

3.28 A common attitude for this community in relation to employment is to be self-sufficient and run family businesses. One participant indicated that entrepreneurship is a tradition in their community and they are naturally good at it. Another participant pointed out that research has identified there are more 'push' factors for ethnic minorities to be self-employed than 'pull' factors. Restaurants are common family businesses for this community.

3.29 The need to support the family is a strong factor influencing attitudes towards employment for this community, which can in turn affect the educational success of children and young people:

- *"My parents didn't go to parents evening because they were working so hard to put food on the table".*

3.30 Frustration at the treatment of friends and family in the labour market was evident amongst some participants. This can have adverse affects on all members of the community as they feel put off from trying to obtain skilled employment due to low morale.

African-Caribbean Community

3.31 There was little information to analyse on the attitudes towards employment amongst this community. Young people from this community participating in the research were in school and aiming to go to college / University. Older participants from this community were educated and highly qualified. Challenges surrounding employment, where faced, focused on lack of recognition of foreign qualifications and in one or two cases, discrimination:

- *"there needs to be an opportunity for African and Caribbean people to be employed in private companies even as volunteers so they can integrate into society. People want to work";*

- *"they should take the bit that asks for race off application forms".*

Decision-Making Factors: Motivations, Influences and Success/Completion Factors

3.32 Factors affecting participants' decisions regarding learning, training and employment include availability of childcare, family culture, choice of subjects, locality and employment prospects. The age and gender of participants also appears to have some bearing on decision making and motivation.

Somali Community

3.33 Motivational factors and influences affecting this community include:

- **location** of learning providers – local provision was highlighted as important for this community as participants prefer to remain in familiar environments and not spend money on transport. Culturally this is easier for women who traditionally do not travel far from the locality;

- **peer pressure** – there is common agreement this affects both sexes and is a particular issue within the Somali community. Some attribute this partly to the various sub-tribes within the community. Adults in the community are concerned that a lack of positive role models within the community is also having an adverse effect on friendship groups:

  - *"I had a mix of friends from all communities, including Welsh kids. However after year nine I changed friends and started to hang around just with Somali kids. Everything went downhill from there. I started bunking lessons and doing what they were doing";*

- There is also evidence to suggest peers influence the decision-making of young people:

  - *"Yeah you just do what your friends do in school don't you …"*;

  - *"I didn't stay on in sixth-form as none of my friends were"*;

  - *"I stayed on because I didn't want anything to change. My friends were staying and I knew the teachers"*;

- **stereotyping and low expectations** in schools has acted as a de-motivating factor for some:

  - *"I really enjoyed primary school, it was fantastic. There was no hassle. At secondary school, the teachers were racist. The kids were racist. I left school at 16 with not much prospects at the time. My parents and family were focused on University. I have brothers and sisters with degrees, masters, PHDs – we are highly qualified as a family. However, there is so much stereotyping in schools and teachers make assumptions"*;

- **family commitments** – some responses from younger participants indicate that interruptions along the learning route can affect success and completion:

  - *"By the time I got back from Somalia it was too late to start the course. So I went to Cardiff ITEC and did a GNVQ in retail and some IT. I got a placement in a shop and they took me on. I worked there for 2 years until it shut down. I'm applying for other jobs in retail. I may go to college later in the year to do IT or something"*;

- Young people's responses often relate to **relationships with teachers** and dislike of authority in terms of motivating and de-motivating factors or view the academic school environment as constraining:

- *"I hated having to sit down in a classroom for an hour just listening to the teacher. It was boring. When they told me off for messing about I used to argue back then I'd get taken out by the teacher. I loved PE though"*;

- *"I felt claustrophobic in school. I didn't like the way the teachers could tell me what to do"*;

- frustration at discrimination and **lack of equal access to jobs** is clearly a de-motivating factor for adult participants. Although the majority of participants were positive about education, there was a sense that they would prefer work-based training rather than full-time courses to help with their employment prospects:

  - *"We need more apprenticeships, placements or training"*.

Pakistani Community

3.34 Factors affecting decision-making, success and completion pertinent to this community include:

- **childcare** – appropriate childcare in an accessible location run by the communities themselves was articulated as a significant decision-making factor for women:

  - *"The learning centre is great because we can leave our children here in the same place that we attend classes"*;

- **strong family bonds and parental support** – there was a sense from participants that the expectations and attitudes of parents and family can affect the motivation and outcome of young people's participation in learning and employment:

  - *"Our parents still have the authority – whatever age you are. If they tell you to do something then you do it. If you get the parents to agree to something then you are half way there"*;

- some **lack of targeted advice and guidance for young people** can contribute to aimless learning which does not help to motivate and can cause young people to drift between providers. When asked as to whether they thought the work-based learning provider was a good decision for them, there was a sense it was a last resort as they hadn't got into college or knew what else to do:

    - *"I applied to do art at college but they wouldn't give me a place"*;

    - *"I was at college doing hairdressing but I dropped out"*;

    - *"It's pretty much like school here, they tell you what to do and that"*;

    - *"I like the fact we get paid for work-based learning"*;

3.35 Furthermore, other young people from this community cited experiences where **course organisation and content** can have a detrimental effect on motivations for learning:

- *"The business admin course is a bit disorganised. One day there'll be 20 people here and another day just two. It varies so much it's really annoying"*;

- *"I came here thinking I would do NVQ 2 but they just put me on NVQ 1. I've done my GCSEs and it just seems to be the same level"*.

Bangladeshi Community

3.36 Factors affecting the decision-making and motivations for this community include:

- **continuing to build on positive experiences** – some participants who are enjoying their adult learning experience often want to find further learning or employment in a similar environment. However some participants displayed some apprehension at leaving their community centre environment. Often they agreed they would like to go to college but appear to lack the knowledge or confidence to progress;

- the need to **support a family** – some participants from this community described their progress through a particular learning route, only to leave due to family commitments:

  - *"I failed my GCSEs and took a City and Guilds course. Due to a family situation I had to leave and work to help support my family"*;

  - *"I wanted to do medicine but unfortunately did not get the grades required. I think this was due to the fact I was 'pushed' for being bright and did 5 A levels which was too much. I therefore didn't go to University – some strong family commitments also prevented me and the need to earn a living took over. I run a successful restaurant"*;

- some participants discussed how **individual teachers** and school experiences can have a wider impact on motivation and attitude. Several **older** participants, particularly male, relayed stories of fights and conflicts with other pupils:

  - *"My drama teacher gave me extra attention because I got into a lot of fights – I always fought back. Another teacher gave up her lunch hour to help me read properly. I went from Set 6 to Set 2 in 6 months"*;

  - *"I used to dread having to summarise passages in English lessons because of my language. I lost a bit of motivation for school"*;

  - *"We were picked on a lot. It's only natural that after 2-3 times you start to retaliate. Doing well was not seen as cool"*.

3.37 However, experiences of conflict with other young people in school were not mentioned by the young people from the Bangladeshi community currently in school:

- **parental support and attitude** is considered important for young people's chances of succeeding:

    – *"Within the Bangladeshi community having the blessing of the elders is everything. Therefore if you can get parents on board to understand what learning / training is available etc then there is a much greater chance of success"*;

- there is a suggestion that whilst parents may value an education in principle, they may not always have the information or time to support their children in the most practical way:

    – *"My dad expects me to be a doctor or a lawyer. When I get a C he asks me why I didn't get an A. Then he tells me to get working in the restaurant"*;

    – *"Yeah, it doesn't matter what happens – if you sweat a lot they still aren't satisfied. I came to parents evening with my dad and when he found out I had a lot of coursework to do, he told me to get straight home and do it"*;

    – *"My sister helps with my homework because my dad is at work and my mum has to cook"*;

    – *"When I asked my dad for help he told me to ask my teachers – he said that's what you go to school for"*;

- **status in the community** – some participants highlighted that Bangladeshi families are quite competitive and jealousy does exist, which can actually act as a motivation for achieving:

    – *"Bangladeshi families talk to each other. If one young person is doing well then parents want the same for their child, there's a lot of jealousy"*;

- *"My dad wants people to know me";*

- **strong family bonds** are a characteristic of this community. Participants were proud of the fact that the Bangladeshi community can help each other regardless of where they are:

  - *"If you arrive in a city in the UK and find a Bangladeshi restaurant or something you know they will help you, whether you are family or not";*

- for some young people, motivation for taking part in work-based training was based on the training allowance:

  - *"You get more money here than if you went to college".*

African-Caribbean Community

3.38 Factors affecting the decision-making and motivations for this community include:

- limited evidence to suggest **lack of parental support** within this community is a factor. Some participants cited receiving help from siblings rather than parents. Another young person described her home life:

  - *"My mum is busy – she's a single mother with six children. I'm the oldest so if I need to do something I do it myself";*

- some comments from young people suggest they can feel that teachers can **stereotype** them in class. Some participants describe experiences of **personality clashes with teachers** which has affected their motivation:

  - *"They don't take me serious...it's because I'm loud, they probably hate me for that";*

- *"I could have finished my trousers in textiles in one year but when I asked for help the teacher ignored me. She wasn't even looking at me, she hates me. I love textiles and will do it again next year but not at school".*

3.39 Other comments can indicate a tendency to proactively overcome barriers which people from the community may face:

- *"I know I can achieve independence with the continuation of my studies. My parents have always taught me that with education comes independence and "that it is a valuable experience to do something for yourself".*

Preferred Learning Routes and Subject Areas

3.40 Overall this was not an area provoking significant discussion amongst the four communities. Much like the wider population, participants study a wide variety of subjects and progress through a variety of learning routes to achieve qualifications or skills.

3.41 What is perhaps of some note is that several older participants told of leaving school or college having not succeeded at GCSE / A Level but returning to education later in life. Alternatively others had begun lucrative self-employment in more than one business which held more attraction than persevering with a course of learning. A number of participants – particularly those from the Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities – cited more than one venture or business with which they were involved with, indicating strong entrepreneurial spirit and an interest in business. Although the vast majority of participants were very positive about the value of education, the fact that many turn to self-employment suggests that in reality formal, mainstream education perhaps hadn't worked for them.

3.42 A preferential subject or learning area arising from the focus groups with females from the Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities is that of childcare or teaching assistants in community learning centres. Several women expressed a desire to become a crèche worker or become a tutor. It was suggested this could have multiple benefits as training more ethnic minority women in childcare not only increases skill levels and boosts employment prospects, but could also address an identified need that women prefer to leave their children with other ethnic minority childminders on site while they attend learning courses.

3.43 Of the young people consulted in school the vast majority indicated they wanted to continue studying after Year 11 either in sixth-form or at college. Future aspirations usually focused on getting a job or going to University or college to study further.

3.44 Subjects most commonly listed as favourites were business and IT, English, textiles, maths / science and PE. The most commonly disliked subjects were languages – French and Welsh for example.

3.45 There is some limited evidence that parents from the Pakistani, Bangladeshi and, to a lesser extent, Somali communities would like children to aspire to highly respected professions such as engineering, medicine, law, business and IT. Aspirations to study business studies or ICT are common amongst the children and young people consulted – particularly Bangladeshi boys. As with adult participants this possibly reflects the expectations of self-employment in the community. Boys were also more likely to say they wanted to earn lots of money. Girls more commonly cite high status professions such as medicine / nursing, architecture, accounting or law as favoured careers.

3.46 Some young people often discussed jobs undertaken by family members as preferred future careers:

- *"I'd like to be a customs officer at the airport – I like the airport environment. My uncle is a customs officer";*

- *"I'd quite like to have my own business but I don't know what, maybe houses. My dad and uncle have businesses in houses".*

3.47 This resonates with young people from the White control group who also cited trades and professions carried out by family members. It is possible that young people aspire to familiar jobs simply because their knowledge and awareness of these jobs is greater.

Support, Advice and Guidance

3.48 Discussions around advice and guidance with **young people** have been largely positive. The majority of young people make their decisions based on their favourite subjects, experiences in school and college, and influences from family and friends.

3.49 Very few of the **young people** consulted in school and college raised significant negative experiences with their school / learning provider, other than comments about specific teachers, subjects and / or course content. There were no comments from young people regarding disadvantage arising from their ethnicity. Those in colleges appreciated the diversity and felt the tutoring support available was sufficient. In this respect, young people already in learning do not perceive their ethnicity as being a barrier to participation and completion.

3.50 Some had discussed subject and career options with a school career advisor. Opinions on this were largely positive; however some participants had clearly felt pressurized to make decisions when faced with a lot of choice. There was a sense from some participants that they had felt a little overwhelmed and would have been preferred to have "*been told what to do*".

3.51 A few young people have visited organisations such as Careers Wales and a minority had used Jobcentre Plus. The vast majority were positive about Careers Wales, appreciating the one-to-one chats and advice received.

3.52 Many of the older participants (over 25) have had more experience of external service providers. Opinions regarding Jobcentre Plus were mixed and participants did voice negative viewpoints which appear to have had some impact on participants' willingness to engage with mainstream providers:

- *"Mainstream providers need diversity training. They lack the knowledge, they are all really young and just don't seem to have the information to be able to help";*

- *"Jobcentre Plus are useless. It's a very hostile environment and they just can't guide you";*

- *"All you see are the security guards on the door. It's really bad";*

- *"Basically they are a shop selling jobs. If you haven't got money then you can't buy. It needs a different approach".*

3.53 Discussions surrounding information available on websites were largely positive. Those with access to the internet appreciate being able to do their own research. However this tended to be those with a higher level of education and skills. One participant hinted that websites can provide a solution if face-to-face guidance was found to be poor, as it meant they could avoid engaging with mainstream service providers. However this was not seen as a positive reason for obtaining information from websites:

- *"Generally it's better to get information from the web as it's easier or enterprise centres who tend to be more friendly".*

3.54 Many felt that internet access wasn't widespread enough throughout the communities (with the exception of the African – Caribbean community), for this to be a significant route for communicating information.

3.55 Overwhelmingly the majority of participants in all communities appreciate face-to-face interaction and tailored, individual advice. Of particular note was the positive experiences cited by participants involved in community-based learning. Many participants, particularly women, spoke of appreciating the informal atmosphere and ability to obtain advice and guidance from tutors and project managers without having to go to another service deliverer.

3.56 However there was an indication that some participants were waiting for the community learning provider to guide them to the next stage and lacked the knowledge to do this themselves. Lack of time and resources within such organisations can result in learners not always getting the right advice in a timely fashion to enable progression. It is evident that confidence-building in a safe environment with people from the same background and ethnicity has an important role to play in enabling people to access mainstream provision for learning and employment in the future.

White Control Group

3.57 The limitations of the White control group as a comparative group have been discussed at the beginning of this section. The White control group was undertaken with assistance from a Cardiff-based organisation which aims to support disengaged young people, many of whom have dropped out of school. Some young people may volunteer at the centre or are supported in other activities. Some support is also provided to get a number of young people back into school or learning. The key messages arising from the White control group are summarised below.

3.58 Perhaps not surprisingly, the majority of the group had negative experiences of school. The main issues cited by the group were:

- **bullying** – this had been experienced in some form or another by the majority of the group;

- **dislike of school environment and authority.** Many discussed that they hated being told what to do:

  – *"It's too strict. I don't like wearing a uniform, being told to wear specific shoes, no hood"*;

- **conflict with teachers** and / or not being listened to as an individual:

  – *"The teachers didn't like me because I have a bad temper"*;

  – *"I was bullied. When my mum visited the school the Head teacher was nice to my face and told me to go to her at anytime to discuss any problems. When I did she locked herself in her room and wouldn't see me".*

3.59 There was a strong sense that their conflict within school and authority had de-motivated these young people from learning. Perceptions that school and their parents view them as badly behaved and had low expectations were common in the group:

- *"My family don't want to know. I think my parents are fed up of people coming to tell them your son's done this".*

3.60 This impression of low expectations is emphasised by the fact that confidence was low amongst the young people, especially regarding their future. However the group was positive about their experience in the support organisation and the attitude of youth workers discussing how being '*treated as an adult'* and '*with respect'* has re-engaged their interest in learning – if not in a mainstream learning environment:

- *"Here is much better than school – they treat you as a person"*;

- *"It matters that you are progressing here. At school if you have had a bad day or get violent no-one cares. People talk to you here".*

3.61 Experiences with peer dynamics within their learning environments and within Cardiff in general were discussed. Interestingly the young people cited they sometimes felt intimidated or discriminated against because they were White. One boy discussed how he wouldn't want to get into the "*territory of the Somali community in Riverside*" for example.

3.62 Decision-making factors and influences included family and friends for the girls in particular, who discussed career options with their mothers or grandparents. The boys tended to feel their families weren't interested. In terms of future aspirations, preferred jobs / training focused on vocational, practical subjects. A few participants listed jobs undertaken by family members, perhaps indicating that family can have an influence in decision-making:

- *"I'd like to be a plasterer, like my uncle and I'm learning the trade"*;

- *"I'd like to be a carpenter like my dad"*;

- *"I might do an apprenticeship but don't know which subject"*;

- *"I want to get a licence for skirting"* (fit skirting boards – construction).

3.63 Foreign language subjects were the most commonly disliked subjects with French, Spanish and Welsh being listed.

3.64 There was a clear message from this group of young people that judgements were made on their appearance:

- *"You can't even walk into Tescos without being judged"*.

4   STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS: KEY FINDINGS

4.1   In this section we consider the key messages from the perspective of the stakeholders consulted during the research.   As per **Table 4.1**, 29 stakeholders were consulted from a range of learning providers, service deliverers and voluntary organisations, all of whom work to support the learning, training and / or employment prospects of people from the four communities.

Table 4.1

Stakeholder Consultations	
Type of Organisation	**Number of Stakeholders**
Community education/support	5
Strategic organisation	4
School/college/university	5
Local Authority service provider	4
Work-based learning provider	3
Welsh Assembly representative	3
Wider organisation	5
Total	**29**

4.2   It is important to note that several stakeholders made general comments in relation to all four communities and could not always differentiate between the ethnic minority groups. In this respect the findings presented below apply to all four communities unless otherwise stated.

4.3   The key messages have been presented under the following headings:

- barriers, motivations and success factors affecting the participation of *young people* from the four communities;

- barriers, motivations and success factors affecting the participation of *adults* from the four communities;

- **engagement and support strategies** currently utilised by organisations.

Young People

4.4 **Parental support** and involvement in a child's education was highlighted as the biggest single factor affecting the outcomes and success of **all** young people. Stakeholders reported varying social and cultural factors faced by families across the four communities which can affect the relationship between parents and school / learning provider and subsequently disadvantage young people's outcomes:

- *"Many families are illiterate. They can't help with homework and children then get caught in the downward cycle"*;

- *"Young people are living between two cultures and are not receiving the support at home. Young people do have respect for their elders and may no want to go against wishes. Some girls will be expected to get married and have children and therefore don't see the point of trying to go to University"*;

- *"Engaging Bangladeshi parents is extremely difficult e.g. getting them to parents evenings. Emphasis on parental involvement is strong in Western culture"*;

- *"Poverty and cultural barriers mean trips outside of the home are virtually none. This disadvantages children and young people as they have few experiences outside of the home to draw on"*;

- *"Parents have unbelievable faith in the school system and don't go in and question the school"*.

4.5 This is not to say that parents and families do not value education, but perhaps do not have the information or skills to support young people which schools and learning providers may assume they have. This indicates there is potential scope for considering how schools and learning providers communicate with parents and families from the four communities.

4.6 Despite stakeholders recognising that parents want children and young people to achieve, it is evident to some stakeholders that parents can place significant **family and household duties** on young people and may not realise the impact of this on learning success:

- *"I have noticed that when it is Ramadan the boys still turn up to college as usual even when they are fasting, however the girls do not come as they have to stay at home to help prepare the food. If there is a family problem e.g. with childcare they will not think twice about keeping them away from college to help with the young children. There have been occasions when students don't come to class because they have to take their parents to hospital because their parents don't speak English";*

- *"Family tradition definitely plays a part in young people's aspirations and achievement. Some families then don't understand the curriculum so they can't support their children. Some children may also grow up thinking school isn't for them and look for opportunities such as work or apprenticeships. However often they aren't getting enough targeted advice".*

4.7 Stakeholders are also aware of the tensions young people can face when balancing their home life with learning. This affects both providers and the young people:

- *"There is definitely a generational influence. The students are very frightened if the college says they are contacting their parents as they know they have to be respectful and do not want to get into trouble. They also do not want to get a bad reputation in the community as a naughty boy and that would have an effect on the communities' view of the family".*

4.8 The tensions between different cultures can mean that parents are reluctant to send their children to college or training providers. Young people have greater freedom and the opportunity to mix with the opposite sex. Not only can this be a factor affecting completion, as they are potentially more likely to drop-out if they do not have the approval of parents, but can also place providers in difficult situations:

- *"Parents of girls tend to be much more involved than for the boys. They want to maintain control a bit more and are worried about mixing with the boys and having more freedom. Once the parents have gone, the girls will have their headdresses off and start smoking. It's a difficult balance".*

4.9 **Low morale** and aspirations stemming from factors such as low banding in schools is thought to play a role in lowering motivation. This was raised by several stakeholders who feel that banding is not always undertaken effectively and can be based on behaviour and racial stereotyping rather than purely on ability:

- *"Often we get teachers who do not understand that pupils have an English language need, not a learning need".*

4.10 **Low confidence** on the part of young people, particularly the Somali community, can mean individuals feel isolated if they attend a learning provider on their own. There is some indication that young people in the community prefer to learn in groups and/or suffer from lack of targeted advice and guidance:

- *"One or two Somali learners will enrol and then a large group will appear. They present some language barriers and often will speak Somali in class which in turn isolates other learners. Frequently one or two will leave and consequently they all go. We either have a large group or no learners from this community at all. It definitely seems they prefer to attend learning in their own friendship groups"*;

- *"We had a group of Somali young men who wanted to do the new SA licence so we put on a course in the community. However we were completely inundated with people wanting to do it – though they hadn't considered what they wanted from it or why"*;

- *"They tend to tell their friends about courses and then they will turn up".*

4.11 Stakeholders perceive there is an acceptance amongst groups of young people that the **parental** way of life should be same for young people within the four communities:

- *"They work in a restaurant and then they start working at the weekends and then a few hours turns into a 40 hour week and they can't cope. They don't have very defined career plans either – a lot of them see their way of life and their parents way of life as what they should do as well"*;

- *"I don't know how much people think about what they want to do or if it is more historical and a pattern emerges over time"*;

- *"Lack of ambition is a barrier – their ambitions do not tend to go beyond what their parents are doing and what their uncles are doing or what their brothers are doing. It tends to be restaurant work or take away shops"*;

- *"It's really difficult to make them see beyond the restaurant sector because they know there is money to be had there and it furnishes their lifestyle. I asked a couple of Bangladeshi boys that I teach whether they had thought about going into the police force and they were absolutely dumbfounded. If they got in there they could do really well. There is positive recruitment going on but they are just not interested. It's not prejudice – because they stay in such close communities that might be a barrier"*;

4.12 **Teaching methods and approaches**, as well as support offered by individual teachers, can have an impact on young people.

- *"Teachers offering support definitely helps – often it can be down to luck which teacher you get. It can have a strong impact on a young person's achievement and attitude towards a subject"*;

- *"There has been a lot of pressure recently to get parents to speak English at home. In actual fact this is the worse thing they can do as children grow up semi-lingual. Children can't learn English unless they are fluent in their own language"*;

- *"Kids often want to talk to people they know i.e. teachers. Often Careers Advisors are brought in. The problem is that teachers don't have the knowledge or information to help them"*.

4.13 As with the focus group participants, overall stakeholders did not perceive there to be **preferred subject areas of learning routes** for young people from the four communities. However, one or two consultees did highlight that boys tend to be interested in IT and business studies. A work-based learning provider supported the finding from the focus groups that girls tend to veer towards the care occupations:

- *"The preferred subjects for girls tend to be childcare. I'd say 9/10 want to do this"*.

African-Caribbean Young People

4.14 The issues facing this community have been more difficult to identify due to the low number of participants for focus groups. However stakeholders working with young people from this community did highlight the following barriers facing this community:

- Children from this community tend to be out-performing, or in line with, the wider population at key stage 1 and 2. Disengagement sets in at key stage 3 and under-achievement occurs at key stage 4;

- As with the Somali community, peer pressure and group culture can have a negative impact on this group. In particular it is characteristic for young people to stick to siblings and friends of different ages who they know in school:

  – *"This is perhaps not the Western culture where it is more accepted that kids stay with their own age group. As a result teachers may see this as gangs being formed and react negatively"*;

  – *"Cultural attitudes can cause misunderstandings – young people may be encouraged to stand up for themselves which can be interpreted as bad behaviour"*.

- Confidence and self-esteem is an issue for young people so attending college can be difficult:

  – *"They don't want to be the only one. They go in groups which results in a high drop-out"*.

4.15 Stakeholders reported that mentoring and peer support works very well with young people from this community.

4.16 Youth work via clubs can be successful as young people can be reluctant to give up their own time outside of normal activities in order to obtain support.

Adults

4.17 **Progressing** from community-based learning to mainstream provision or employment is thought to be too great a jump for many members of these communities:

- *"There is a massive gap between community learning and mainstream learning. There is a lack of intermediary stages to support that progression. Support is needed to take these individuals from a safe environment to an unfamiliar one";*

- *"Older community members, particularly women, are sometimes happy in their 'little enclave' not keen to venture out beyond their immediate area. The work we have done with older learners has highlighted that they want to learn but they prefer to do courses that are less academic, that will relate/assist them within the community and that is delivered in their community setting";*

- *"People use the phrase hard-to-reach frequently but I don't think that's always true. People like face-to-face interaction and one-to-one chats. Building relationships through trust is best. Young people may be more likely to gain access to the internet but it's not necessarily the case with adults".*

4.18 Stakeholders were keen to point out that an awareness of the social and cultural factors on the part of learning providers is key to working with and providing support for adult learners, particularly women:

- *"There is a local education authority centre only 10 minutes away – but nobody uses it. It's on the opposite side of a large road which people don't like using as culturally it presents barriers. The shopping area around there isn't used either by the communities";*

- *"At EID the Pakistani women just don't attend classes as they stay at home to cook. We might see it as male dominance – it's just the way it is culturally";*

- *"Women often want to work or learn but may have some cultural / lifestyle issues with partners. I have often sensed apprehension from male partners. Building relationships and recognising sensitivities is very important".*

4.19 Stakeholders working with large numbers of women from the Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities cite that frequently women want to undertake voluntary work in the care sector i.e. with children, in hospitals etc. This supports findings form the focus groups with female participants who often cited they would like to work with children.

4.20 Undertaking voluntary work was a common activity amongst participants. To what extent this is representative of the communities or that focus groups attracted those with an active interest in supporting their own communities is difficult to tell. Some were doing this to give something back whilst for others it was the main activity. There may be scope for developing and promoting the skills gained from voluntary work for individuals to progress into mainstream employment.

Engagement and Support Strategies

4.21 There is a variety of learning support offered to learners and potential learners with the aim of engaging with and furthering success amongst all ethnic minority groups as well as the four selected communities. These fall under the following types.

<u>Local Authority Provision:</u>

- Key services provided by the LA include:

    - Swansea Ethnic Minority Language and Achievement Service (**EMLAS**);

    - Gwent Education Multi-Ethnic Support Service (**GEMSS**);

    - Cardiff's Ethnic Minority Achievement Service (**EMAS**);

- for example, Swansea EMLAS offer English as an Additional Language (**EAL**) which provides children in class with one-to-one support with English in the context of the curriculum. The support provided is for an academic reason and fits alongside mainstream teaching. This support is very different to ESOL which doesn't relate English language learning to the curriculum setting as EAL does. This can therefore present a barrier as children get older and leave school:

  - *"The problem for post-16 year olds is that they still require English support after they leave school and go to college. However suddenly it becomes ESOL which isn't the same. Colleges need to know this. There is a high drop-out in colleges – in part due to the lack of continuity as the models of support change. There is some lack of EAL recognition in colleges"*;

- Cardiff EMAS set up a voluntary work scheme with the All Wales Ethnic Minority Association (**AWEMA**). This placed community members (including Somali and Pakistani individuals) into schools to mentor young people. Not only did this help provide role models for the young people, but volunteers were able to gain mainstream employment;

- Education Mentor Support work as undertaken by the City and Council of Swansea which provides mentors to young people to address disengagement at 16-19.

Voluntary/Community-based Provision:

- Community organisations based in local areas where learners from the communities live. Learning courses often focus on English, IT, literacy / numeracy and personal development or targeted employability courses such as CV writing. Such centres are often responding to a range of related problems and act as information givers as well as learning providers. Adult learners within these centres tend to find the friendly, informal learning with others from the same background more accessible than large colleges:

- *"We follow the ESOL curriculum and each level has a syllabus that people follow. They will look at the people in the class and if there are a lot of people looking for work there would be more focus on that element of the curriculum. If it was a group of women with children then they would change the focus"*;

- *"If they ring at 4pm asking for help with a form we can help with that. Colleges can't. One learner immediately felt better when we allowed them to make calls home from the centre using their phone card. Addressing seemingly small problems can have a profound effect on learning"*.

- BME support organisations designed to help businesses and individuals access mainstream support more successfully by acting as a 'bridge'. For example the Ethnic Business Support Programme (EBSP) offers advice to those looking to set and maintain their own business;

- wider voluntary organisations designed to build capacity within communities e.g. Scarman Trust;

- advice centres or support services run within the communities themselves e.g. the Mosque can act as a mini citizens advice bureau;

- lack of established strategic organisations advocating on behalf of the Somali Community in particular, is an issue raised by those consulted. Currently organisations operating on behalf of this community include:

  - Somali Integration Society;

  - Somali Youth Association;

  - Somali Progressive Association.

4.22 Such organisations often rely on volunteers and short-term project funding to help support the community and often a lot of resource and time is devoted to sourcing funding for projects or assisting with urgent needs such as housing or form filling:

> – *"They are doing their best but the community organisations can't support all the Somalis in the area".*

4.23 The Somali Integration Society in particular aims to help the Somali community integrate into mainstream society more effectively. It develops projects focusing on health, culture, the arts and education to help the community. It has also started to develop partnerships with Jobcentre Plus and other agencies. However much of its work is in its infancy. More resource and time, as well as support from the Welsh Assembly, is required to allow organisations such as these to plan overarching, strategic support for the community.

4.24 Support offered within <u>mainstream providers or service deliverers</u>:

- FE colleges and work-based learning providers tend to offer individual support via a tutorial system and induction programme. Open days offering job and careers advice both to all students and to those from a BME background are common in the main colleges. Some colleges are working with organisations such as Minority Ethnic Women Network (MEWN) who run workshops with students. Support and engagement tend to focus on an 'inclusive' ethos in that all individuals are respected and supported for their individual needs rather than a targeted approach on specific communities;

- schools may offer specific support to individuals from ethnic minority backgrounds. Some schools employ School Liaison Officers who are often from the same ethnic minority community as the families they work with. They provide face-to-face support and contact with pupils and their families; providing services such as interpretation, information on the education system and supporting attendance at parents' evenings:

  > – *"We had a home school liaison officer who conducted home visits, built trust with parents and helped with translating and interpreting"*;

- the REMA project (Raising Ethnic Minority Achievement) focuses on young people from ethnic minority communities including those from the Somali community, with borderline grades in schools who need extra help and support to push them through. Reports are sent home direct to the parents and study sessions / home work clubs are provided for those not receiving support at home. Young people are also provided with a mentor:

  - *"The average for Somali boys is 15% gaining A-Cs but at the school the project has increased this to 66%. Interventions do work*";

- Want2work is a joint venture between the Welsh Assembly and Jobcentre Plus, funded by the European Social Fund. Its aim is to get those economically inactive into work. It is not designed for those on Jobseekers allowance who are eligible for NEW Deal. It targets wards with high rates of economic inactivity including Butetown, Grangetown and Riverside. Approximately 25% of those they work with are from ethnic minority communities. Personal advisors work with individuals to develop an action plan. The advisors operate in outreach centres such as post offices, libraries and community centres.

4.25 Comments from a number of stakeholders have highlighted that although there are numerous short-term interventions going on which are successful and effective, they have some concerns about the sustainability and long-term funding for such projects. Stakeholders emphasised the importance of awareness-raising and training for all those working with the four communities:

- *"In general most projects designed to provide extra support for lots of target groups are working but not necessarily sustainable. They are too reliant on non-statutory funding*";

4.26 There is also some frustration that funding is not reaching those most in need, particularly on the part of the Somali community.   For example there is a sense from some community leaders that the Somali community is often targeted for support in bids but that the funding is not coordinated effectively.   This is perhaps compounded by the lack of a strategic organisation required to provide direction:

- *"We need to get WAG and the community together.   Funding for the community has been received from some organisations but the Somali community hasn't seen it.   There needs to be more accountability and WAG need to check the money is being spent appropriately".*

Success Factors

4.27 Consultations with stakeholders elicited a number of success factors which have achieved greater success in engaging with the four communities and raising their participation and success in learning. For example:

- community-based provision, this is especially successful for engaging women who may not have the confidence to travel far from home;

- outreach work – stakeholders emphasised the increased response from the communities by going out to familiar environments where they live and work;

- using grass-roots and community organisations in conjunction with mainstream providers to give credibility to activities;

- employing visible members of ethnic minority communities to undertake work within the four communities;

- promotion of short learning courses (not for ESOL however requires more time) – often people cannot see the benefit of long term WBL courses;

- courses to suit particular groups i.e. single sex classes and classes for different abilities rather than general courses;

- raising confidence and self-esteem of young people via mentoring and peer support;

- engendering a culture of respect and fairness for young people from these communities e.g. by listening to and logging racist incidents.

Targeted Materials

4.28 There were some views that translation of materials and leaflets or distribution of information via websites *does not necessarily* help break down communication barriers. Although it is a goodwill gesture, if people have little literacy in their first language then translation becomes useless:

- *"Since language is the biggest barrier and parents often have few literacy skills themselves, translation of documents, school reports, leaflets, although an understanding gesture, is not always helpful in breaking down communication barriers for some communities".*

4.29 Web information is being used by a selection of stakeholders and participants though many have highlighted that internet access is not common across some sections of the four communities. Participants tended to be positive about information available on the web though did not regard it as a substitute for face-to-face advice and guidance.

5 DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY OF KEY MESSAGES

5.1 It is evident, from both focus group participants and stakeholders, that there are some key factors affecting sections of all the four communities. Areas of **commonality** are presented below.

5.2 A lack of *English for Speakers of other Languages (ESOL) and English as an Additional Language (EAL) support* – demand is outstripping supply and long waiting lists are a cause of frustration in all communities. This is of key concern for the Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Somali communities as it is a major, initial barrier to further study and gaining employment. ESOL courses are also too short and not progressive enough to reach the required standard for employment. It is also felt that such courses could provide a means of accessing practical information or developing employability skills.

5.3 A lack of *positive role models* within the communities and lack of celebration of the successes of individual community members was raised amongst all communities. It is thought this is lowering the morale of community members, particularly the young people. Furthermore a lack of visible ethnic minorities employed in schools, learning providers and service deliverers can mean young people do not aspire to careers within such organisations.

5.4 A tendency towards *self-employment* – although perceived as a positive choice, there is an indication that there may also be 'push factors' at work as a result of discrimination in the labour market. Self employment also appears to maintain the strong family bonds, which is of clear importance to many within these four communities.

5.5   A lack of *pro-active parental involvement and support* in the education of young people was prevalent amongst all four communities.   Although families value education and in some instances, particularly the Bangladeshi and Pakistani communities, have extremely high expectations of young people, there is evidence to suggest that parents are not always in a position to **practically** support young people to improve their outcomes.   Specific issues facing families include:

- lack of subject and curriculum information;

- lack of knowledge of the UK education system;

- lack of fluent English skills to help young people with homework, read school reports etc;

- in some cases parents can treat boys and girls differently, often being stricter with girls who consequently have more time at home for study. Boys are more likely to be asked to work in the family business which may impinge on study time.

5.6   A preference for *face-to-face advice and guidance* was voiced by many – all participants highlighted their preference for individual tailored advice and guidance, delivered face-to-face.   Frustration at the lack of ethnic minority individuals employed by service deliverers was also common, indicating a preference for advice and guidance from another community member. Furthermore, many participants have highlighted they prefer obtaining guidance and advice from community, grass-roots organisations where they feel understood and have had a positive learning experience.

5.7   Issues raised by individual communities, highlighting specific **differences** are discussed below.   A box summarising the key characteristics and issues facing each community is also provided.

Somali Community

5.8   A *lack of established organisations* advocating on behalf of the Somali community appears to be compounding some of the issues facing this community.   In particular there is a lack of *long standing strategic* organisations that can liaise with mainstream organisations, facilitate discussion amongst voluntary / community organisations on the ground and provide direction and policy for this group.

5.9   A cycle of *low expectations and aspirations* appears to be a particular challenge for the Somali community.   Some participants have felt discriminated against in the labour market and feel that equal opportunity simply does not exist.   Whilst members of the other communities also felt equality of access was an issue, frustration and lack of morale was very apparent amongst Somali participants.   There is also a sense that young people are caught in this cycle of low aspirations, often assuming they will carry on in low skilled work similar to that of their parents.   Some older participants feel that low expectations begin in school with low streaming for school subjects being prevalent amongst this community (streaming or banding is where pupils are placed in different classes for subjects according to ability).

5.10 *Attitudes towards women* can differ to these in Western culture.   Females can be more isolated than and not as visible in the community as males. Traditionally they are expected to remain in the home. Somali young people can be less respectful towards female tutors in learning providers.

5.11 The community suffers from *a lack of wider social networks.*   Participants described a different socialising culture to that of the wider population, which precludes women. As such the community struggles to integrate and make contacts which may otherwise alleviate isolation as well as improve employability.

5.12 There is evidence that young people from the Somali community have a tendency to stick to their own friendship groups when attending learning or training providers. Peer pressure and group culture is characteristic of this group of young people, particularly boys. This may stem from a lack of confidence or apprehension at being in a minority within a mainstream provider.

Somali (Black African) Community
• highest proportion of ethnic minority young people from Cardiff, (particularly Somali), reside in Butetown. 27% of the Black African population are aged under 16; • economic activity rate is 61% for this community and 40% of the 16-24 age group are unemployed. **Social and Cultural Factors** • significant numbers of the community arrived in the late 1980s and early 1990s – some adults missed out on parts of their secondary education and lack of fluent English is a core problem; • lack of positive role models, strong cycle of low expectations and aspirations: low morale in the community in general; • too few strategic or community organisations to advocate on the community's behalf – although they are an established group, integration has been limited and there is considerable isolation, particularly for women; • cultural attitudes towards women: some lack of respect for female tutors; • peer pressure and group influence is particularly prevalent amongst young people in the community. Often they are 'torn between two cultures'.

Pakistani and Bangladeshi Communities

5.13 *Lack of appropriate childcare* – it is evident that many women from both these communities prefer to leave their children *locally* and with another member of the same community and / or another ethnic minority childcare worker.

5.14 Females from both these communities can be more *isolated* due to the expectation of their roles within the family. There was a sense however that women from these communities would like to undertake more learning and / or employment but lack confidence. This lack of confidence can stem from poor English language ability or expectation from partners / husbands and wider community that they run the home and family. There can be mistrust of learning providers on the part of males in some (not all) sections of these communities.

5.15 Parents in these communities can have *high but unrealistic expectations* of their children, which may not reflect actual ability. This may have an adverse effect on the motivation of young people.

5.16 Furthermore there is also some evidence to suggest that parents from these communities can have complete faith in the *education system* and tend not to question the educational progress of their children in the traditional way which schools may expect. This may stem from a cultural belief that schools are the experts or lack of English skills to communicate with schools. Consequently if a child or young person is not in a class or course level with their ability, parents are less likely to intervene.

5.17 Female participants from both these communities often (though not always) preferred the option of having single sex classes. This can be less intimidating as well as ensure the trust of other members of the family / community.

Pakistani Community

- 33% of the population are under 16;
- low economic activity rate – 57%;
- 34% of females are economically inactive;
- both sexes are more likely to be self-employed than the general population.

Social and Cultural Factors

- strong emphasis on the domestic role of women; some isolation of women who are expected to remain in the home;

- more likely to come from farming/rural backgrounds with little history of education and with poorer literacy skills;

- lack of fluent English amongst older generations;

- emphasis on families and respect for elders: young people are often 'town between two cultures';

- high expectations of children and young people, though parents frequently do not offer enough support at home;

- expectation that young people help at home or in the family business;

- tendency on part of the women to want to work in care environments, or with children for example;

- some sections of the Pakistani community are suspicious of allowing greater freedom for women. Male members of the community can be fearful of letting partners attend learning/work. Parents can fear the freedom offered to young people in colleges etc;

- some lack of confidence at entering unfamiliar learning environments.

Bangladeshi Community

- 39% of the Bangladeshi community are under 16;
- low economic activity rate – 53%;
- 22% of females are economically inactive;
- females are more likely to work part time.

Social and Cultural Factors

- Poor fluency in English – over ¾ of women over 25 do not speak fluent English;

- more likely to come from rural/farming backgrounds;

- limited integration and social isolation, particularly for women;

- less likely to use formal childcare;

- poverty and overcrowding in housing, making study more difficult for young people;

- poor literacy skills in their first language making learning English more difficult. Some speak Sylheti which has no written form;

- expectations that young people help out at home or in the family business making study more difficult;

- lack of understanding on part of parents of UK education system which can contribute to a lack of involvement in child's education;

- emphasis on families and respect for elders: young people are often 'torn between two cultures'.

African-Caribbean Community

5.18 This community is the most integrated of the four communities researched. Inter-cultural relationships are more common in this community which adds a different perspective to experiences.

5.19 Although English is not usually a significant problem for this ethnic minority group and thus communication with schools is easier, in some instance parents have been to the same school as their children and may have had negative experiences. Consequently this affects how positive they are towards their child's education.

5.20 Under-achievement, particularly amongst boys, is of particular concern for this community. Disengagement is thought to begin between key stage 2 and key stage 3. Stakeholders discussing this community cite that mentoring and peer support can work particularly well with young males from the African – Caribbean community.

5.21 Members of this community can suffer from racial stereotyping, which was discussed in relation to this community more than any other.

African Caribbean Community
- significant number of young people aged between 16 and 24;   - high unemployment (29%) amongst females aged between 16 and 24;   - females more likely to work part time though are more likely than other ethnic minority groups (especially Pakistani and Bangladeshi) to use formal childcare.   **Social and Cultural Factors**   - Some racial stereotyping of both men and women who have a higher unemployment rate than the overall population though not as pronounced as other groups;

- reliance on low skilled work;

- low expectations – starting in school. Evidence that boys, in particular, do not achieve as highly as others.

Young People

5.22 Overall young people in school and college did not often relate specific barriers or challenges to learning and training arising from their community background. Many appeared happy with the teaching and support and were satisfied with the choices they had made.   A minority described some religious pressures from outside of school which had impacted on their learning.   This tended to be those children in the younger years of secondary education who felt that going to the Mosque in the evenings left them with less time.   This pressure appears to ease as children become teenagers.

5.23 Where negative experiences of school or college were discussed they often focused on particular subjects, teachers or dislike of authority / being told what to do.   These are likely to be common complaints from many young people, regardless of ethnicity.   Young people in the White control group also cited similar dislikes associated with the learning environment.   In particular experiences of conflict with teachers and dislike of authority were common to both White NEET young people and NEET young people from the four communities.

5.24 There was however more dissatisfaction with learning amongst young people from the four communities within the work-based learning providers.   Here negative views focused on course content; training being too easy or uninteresting.   Motivations for choosing this path were sometimes unclear and receiving money for training was the main motivation for some.

5.25 Key motivations and influences for young people for all four communities are clearly affected by those they are surrounded by on a daily basis i.e. family, friends and teachers. Whilst most children and young people appear to want to make their own decisions, many have discussed their GCSE / college subjects with parents, brothers and sisters and wider family members. This was a similar pattern with participants from the White control group.

5.26 In particular young people from all communities, including the White control group, cited jobs and professions undertaken by family members. It is possible that this occurs as young people have more information and experience of these jobs.

5.27 From the stakeholders' perspectives, factors particularly affecting the motivation of young people from the selected four communities include:

- *low banding* in schools. Although in some instances this will be a correct assessment of ability, there are perceptions that this can also occur as a result of misinterpretation of language ability or testing in a manner which only suits learners from the general population;

- some feel that the *curriculum* is biased towards the general White population and unwittingly discriminates against ethnic minorities, particularly those from the four communities;

- *peer pressure* and lack of practical parental support and involvement in their child's education through lack of information are also important issues cited by teachers/tutors and stakeholders. Frequently discussions focused on how young people are 'torn between two cultures'. Parents can be pulling young people in one direction whilst schools and peer groups are pulling in another.

5.28 Although those in the White control group didn't highlight peer pressure as a problem, many did raise bullying as a significant factor contributing to their disengagement from learning. This perhaps highlights that all young people are exposed to peer group culture, regardless of ethnicity, which can contribute to disaffection.

6   RECOMMENDATIONS

This research has highlighted some of the key social and cultural barriers; as well as motivations and influences for participation in learning and employment. It has also identified some of the impacts participation in learning and employment can have on the four communities. As a result of the key messages arising from the focus groups and stakeholder consultations (Section 5), the following recommendations have been developed. These recommendations are aimed at boosting participation in learning, training and employment amongst the four communities as part of strategies focusing on achievement of all ME groups.

1. There is a need to ensure that the provision of English language courses is of sufficient quality and quantity to meet the needs of the market.
   - Support for English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) learners needs to be adequate to enable individuals to effectively access and benefit from learning and employment opportunities.
   - There is a need to ensure that the focus of these classes is on the needs and ability of appropriate groups which is crucial to maintain motivation and promote progression. Course content needs to focus on employment skills, such as CV writing and interview skills which would also enable communities to build wider skills.

2. Consideration should be given to training and up-skilling teachers and tutors so that they are able to better include and support learners from the four communities within mainstream education. This may include raising awareness of the social and cultural factors affecting learners as well as equipping teachers to make the curriculum more accessible and relevant to all pupils.

3. The Welsh Assembly Government in developing its policies on minority ethnic achievement in education, skills training and lifelong learning should consider the views of all minority ethnic groups and encourage them to work in partnership at all levels -   community level to government level.

4. There may be options to utilise community based settings to encourage people into education gradually. Where appropriate, options for a variety of different classes based on ability, gender and age should be considered.

5. Schools and learning providers should be encouraged to consider how they communicate with parents. Promotion of successful mechanisms such as school liaison officers (see Section 4) which improve communication between schools, colleges and families could be considered.

6. Improved guidance on existing ethnic minority data collection: i.e. encouraging providers to collect according to *local* circumstances rather than solely against broad categories. Data on the Somali community is hidden within figures for the Black African community for example. Providers could collect more detail under the broad classifications which would provide more information and enable targeted awareness-raising on sub-groups within communities. Interventions could then be targeted effectively.

7. The development of appropriate, local childcare to meet the needs of individuals in the four communities perhaps based within community education providers, or easily accessible community centres should be encouraged. Furthermore, facilitating access to training within the childcare / wider care sector for females from the four communities may support the development of new childcare facilities as well as raising employability skills.

8. There may be a benefit in providing continuity of support for learners at transitional stages e.g. primary to secondary school and school to college / WBL. For example, this may involve home work / study clubs for those in the first two years of secondary school when external commitments may conflict with study time. Increasing targeted support and guidance amongst societies such as friendship groups as young people go to college or other learning providers could also be considered. This may alleviate isolation or lack of confidence in attending learning by themselves.

9. Improving progression from community learning to mainstream learning could be done by encouraging colleges and other mainstream learning providers to regularly communicate with community-based organisations to provide information on forthcoming courses. Encouraging organisations such as Jobcentre Plus to facilitate workshops with learners at community learning centres before they finish courses should also be considered.

10.   Mechanisms might be developed for promoting positive role models for young people so as to raise confidence and aspirations amongst the community.   Building on existing youth work and providing young people with mentors from their own community can support this process