Black and minority Ethnic groups in North Yorkshire

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Aims

This study was conducted on behalf of the North Yorkshire Equality and Diversity Strategic Partnership in 2016. It was funded by the Big Lottery Fund. The aim was to map existing BME groups across North Yorkshire and to understand their experiences of living in the county and of accessing public sector services.

Methodology

The following methods were used:

- Existing statistical data was used to map the BME population across the county. This included: 2011 census data; the North Yorkshire Schools Census; data from North Yorkshire and East Riding Local Enterprise Partnership about migration trends, and data collected by Migration

North.

- A review of existing research.
- Focus group and interviews with people with a BME background living in North Yorkshire. Participants were engaged in discussion about the challenges they face living in the county and the changes they would like to see. About a dozen focus groups took place, and there were also a couple of one-to-one interviews. There was also discussion in their interest in a wider development to give BME groups a voice.
- Most participants were contacted via third sector organisations in North Yorkshire and by visiting and interacting with grassroots community groups. Some religious groups and English classes were also approached.

The report highlighted the difficulties of contacting and reaching certain groups during the data collection phase. The research took place across North Yorkshire, excluding York.

Key issues

Several themes emerged from the research:

- **Diversity of people and cultures across North Yorkshire**

The research stresses that North Yorkshire has a diverse population, warning against generalising about experiences and concuding that ‘Meeting the needs of such a diverse population in a culturally sensitive way presents a challenge to those providing services across the county’ (p.23) and that ‘The diversity and low numbers of any one group accentuated the issue of invisibility’ (p.25). Some communities such as the Pakistani Kashmiri community in Skipton are well established. Other more recent arrivals include people from eastern Europe working in Selby and Malton packing plants, and Filipino nurses working in the large hospitals. The county is also culturally diverse in the sense that it comprises seven districts each with its own particular culture.

- **Differential expectations of support**

People’s expectations in terms of the support they need from public service also vary depending on their background: ‘People who were settled in the UK and had a history of living here over generations tended to have higher expectations, possibly as a result of living in a culture with a welfare state for longer’ (p.17).

- **Stressful working conditions for migrant workers.**

Migrants with a professional background reported wanting to improve their English in order to return to their original occupation, but cost of ESOL was identified as a challenge, as well as difficulties in having qualifications recognised. In the meantime they were doing lower-skilled jobs that do not necessarily meet their preferences. There were reports of

unsatisfactory working conditions, with possible concerns around exploitation.

- **Issues of living in a rural or semi-rural area**

While some expressed feeling safer in a rural area as opposed to a more urban setting, participants identified challenges such as difficulties sourcing halal food and access to services. Some good experiences of schools were highlighted.

- **Support to BME communities**

The author found that for most communities, support derived mainly from faith settings. Other sources of support were children's centres, ESOL providers, and a housing association supporting gypsies and travellers. While community organisations have not always developed in areas with higher numbers of people from similar backgrounds, the voluntary sector has helped groups wanting to provide mutual support, such as the Richmond Gurkha and Nepalese Group.

Recommendations

The author makes six recommendations:

1. Increased awareness of the diversity of the population in North Yorkshire, often regarded as 'monochrome'.

2. A 'needs not number approach' by service providers, incorporated into equality frameworks.

3. The development of an equalities reference group as a platform for people with one or more protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act.

4. A county wide training programme covering information on how systems work, advocacy and campaigning skills, and group development.

5. Further research to learn more about the needs of different groups and to identify other ‘hidden’ groups.

6. Collate and share examples of good practice of service provision that exist across the county.

Web Link
https://hub.datanorthyorkshire.org/dataset/acf3a1c4-4edd-49f3-ba8f-f8bf02d5e7d9…
Topic
Access to employment
Access to healthcare
Community and society
Community cohesion
Education
Equality groups
ESOL
Family migrants
Integration
Labour conditions
Migrant workers
Migration trends
Place

North Yorkshire
Year
2016
Resource Type
Report

Source URL: *https://www.migrationyorkshire.org.uk/research-entry/black-and-minority-ethnic-groups-north-yorkshire-0*