

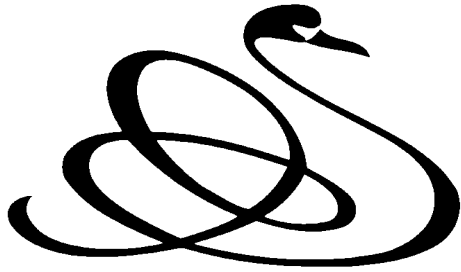
York Consulting

**WELSH ASSEMBLY GOVERNMENT
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, LIFELONG LEARNING AND
SKILLS**

ETHNIC MINORITY RESEARCH

FINAL REPORT

MAY 2006



York Consulting

Originated by: Onyema Ibe

Dated: 29/03/06

Reviewed by: Philip Wilson

Dated: 04/04/06

**WELSH ASSEMBLY GOVERNMENT
DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION, LIFELONG LEARNING AND
SKILLS**

ETHNIC MINORITY RESEARCH

FINAL REPORT

Contents

	<u>Page</u>
1 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	1
2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS.....	2
3 INTRODUCTION.....	5
4 LITERATURE REVIEW	10
5 LEARNER CONSULTATIONS	24
6 STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS	34
7 KEY MESSAGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS	39
APPENDIX A – LEARNER STRANDS	
APPENDIX B – REFERENCES	

1 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

York Consulting Ltd would like to thank the three FE colleges – Coleg Glan Hafren, Coleg Gwent and Swansea College and the three Work Based Learning providers – ACT training, Protocol Skills and Prp Training for their help and support in accessing their learners. Sincere thanks are also extended to the 50 learners for their frank accounts of their experiences and we are also grateful for the time and contributions from the stakeholders who have been consulted, their views have also been an invaluable element within the research.

2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Background

- 2.1 Prior to its merger with the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG), Education and Learning Wales (ELWa) had responsibility for directing, planning, managing and promoting post-16 education and training in Wales, with the exception of Higher Education. This included Further Education (FE), Adult Continuing Education (ACE), Sixth Form Colleges and Work Based Learning (WBL) programmes. The Department for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DELLS) is now responsible for these areas.
- 2.2 In order to help meet its responsibilities, WAG continues to improve its understanding of the needs and experiences of those learners in receipt of learning and training.
- 2.3 This piece of research explored the experiences of learners from a black and minority ethnic (BME) background and gain a better understanding of the motivations, aspirations and challenges faced by BME learners in FE and work based learning. The information it provides will be used to inform the work of DELLS marketing teams and planning and policy teams.

Research Methodology

- 2.4 A literature review was conducted to analyse recent research about BME learners' experiences, progression routes and educational achievements. This helped to identify a more specific context for the research and to draw on studies and accounts of the experiences of a wide range of learners.
- 2.5 The second stage of the research was the consultation with 50 learners from three FE colleges and three WBL providers, where discussions explored their individual learning experiences, motivations and aspirations.

- 2.6 The third and final stage was a series of consultations with key stakeholders involved in delivering or planning/supporting the delivery of services to BME learners. This offered a perspective from the service providers and policy makers at both the grassroots and the strategic level and identified common areas for development and good practice examples.

Overall Findings

- 2.7 The review of literature from English, Welsh and Scottish studies into educational experiences and learner achievements highlighted some patterns in the learning routes and educational achievements of learners from a BME background. The body of research also identified a range of dispositional, informational, institutional and situational barriers to learning that many individuals and BME groups faced. The research proposed ways of better addressing the needs of BME learners and offered examples of good practice from learning providers who had taken steps to provide more appropriate services.
- 2.8 Overall, the learners who were interviewed gave a positive account of their experience and enjoyed their learning environment. They offered a variety of reasons and factors for pursuing their learning and had future ambitions that centred on further study and particular career aspirations. Most of the challenges faced by the learners in their learning environment related to generic issues, which were no different to other learners, like the lack of facilities or transport difficulties. A small number of consultees highlighted some experience of stereotyping by teaching staff or difficulties with teaching styles when English was not their first language.
- 2.9 The stakeholder consultations highlighted some of the work that is being conducted to address the needs of BME learners and potential learners and revealed common areas of concern and future development. These included:
- effective communication;
 - engagement with local communities;
 - effective partnership working;
 - race equality and cultural awareness;
 - informed policy making and practice;
 - funding;
 - impact of new arrivals.

Key Recommendations and Areas for Future Research

2.10 The need for more Welsh-specific research was recognised by many stakeholders and this is evidenced by the scarce number of published studies in this area of post-16 learning and training. Areas for future research were identified as work looking at:

- perceived barriers for potential learners from BME backgrounds;
- WBL provision and BME learners;
- embedding equalities into FE College ethos;
- longitudinal studies with post-16 learners.

2.11 The rest of the report provides a full introduction to the work, looks at each of stages of the project, and concludes with proposals for areas for future focus and research.

3 INTRODUCTION

- 3.1 York Consulting Limited (YCL) was commissioned by Education and Learning Wales (ELWa) to undertake research to develop a deeper understanding of the learning experiences, motivations and aspirations of black and minority ethnic (BME) learners in Wales. In April 2006 ELWa merged with the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) and is now part of the Department for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DELLS).

Background

- 3.2 Prior to the merger with WAG, ELWa was responsible for directing, planning, managing and promoting post-16 education and training in Wales, with the exception of Higher Education.
- 3.3 In order to ensure the effective deployment of Government Funds, WAG is committed to evaluation and research that helps identify and understand changing learning needs and priorities which will assist in the aspiration of creating a 'Learning Country'. This piece of research looked at the post-16 learning and training and BME learners.

Legislation to Promote Race Equality

- 3.4 The Race Relations Act 1976 makes it unlawful to discriminate on the grounds of race, colour, nationality or citizenship, ethnic or national background in areas of employment, education, housing and the provision of goods and services.
- 3.5 This piece of legislation was strengthened by the requirements in the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 which markedly changed the context in which public sector services were delivered.
- 3.6 The amendment strengthened the Race Relations Act's application to public authorities in several ways but crucially it placed a general statutory duty to promote racial equality and prevent racial discrimination.

3.7 The duty aims to make the promotion of racial equality central to the way public authorities work from planning through to policy and service delivery. Public authorities like WAG have had to set out their arrangements for meeting these legislative requirements in a Race Equality Scheme (RES) which includes:

- assessing and consulting on policies or proposed policies;
- monitoring policies for adverse impact;
- ensuring public access to information and services;
- training staff in connection with the duties.

3.8 As a result FE colleges should have prepared written statements of their policy for promoting race equality and have introduced arrangements to:

- assess the impact of their policies on students and staff of different racial groups;
- monitor the admission and progress of students and the recruitment and career progress of staff by racial groups;
- publish their institution's results of assessment and monitoring.

Black and Minority Ethnic People in Wales

3.9 According to the 2001 Census of Population, 2.1 % of the Welsh population are from a black or minority ethnic background. Whilst the proportion of people from a visible minority ethnic background is small, the challenges of meeting the duty to promote race equality and delivering relevant and appropriate services should not be underestimated.

3.10 There are significant geographical variations in the BME population across Wales with people from BME backgrounds concentrated in the three biggest cities. In Cardiff eight per cent of the population are from a BME background, in Newport five per cent and in Swansea two percent of the population are BME people.

3.11 The age structure within the BME is also varied. The Census of Population showed that the “Mixed group” had the youngest age structure with 47% under age 16, followed by the Bangladeshi group (39%) and the Pakistani group (33%). This is compared to 20% of the white population who are under the age of 16. Therefore the location of BME people across Wales and the changing demographics within the population have future implications for learning providers.

3.12 In three out of the four forms of post 16 learning¹, learners from a BME background are represented in higher proportions, than in the Welsh population overall. WAG’s records for 2003 show that:

- in Further Education 3.8% are BME learners;
- 4.2% of sixth form learners are from a BME background;
- in Adult Community Learning there are 2.2% of learners from minority ethnic groups.

3.13 Work based learning (WBL) is the only area where the proportion of BME learners is in fact lower, at 1.6% of learners in WBL provision.

Research

3.14 The research into BME learners’ experiences was conducted over a four month period between January and April 2006 and aimed to address the following research objectives:

- complete case studies on examples of good practice for learners, learning providers and advisors and external agencies;
- understand what motivates learners to undertake learning which is different to that of the general population as a whole;
- identify the barriers to learning and what de-motivates learning participation;
- discover which ethnic minority groups are more or less likely than others to participate in learning – including information on completion rates;

¹ excluding Higher Education

- identify any issues or problems specific to the learning experience of BME groups;
- identify which community and voluntary groups represent and advise BME learners and what role they take;
- make recommendations for overcoming barriers;
- make recommendations to ensure a smooth transition between school and FE/WBL;
- make recommendations for improvements to the learning experience;
- outline directions for possible future research.

Research Methodology

3.15 York Consulting's approach to addressing the research requirements was to use a combination of qualitative techniques that were most appropriate for the range of stakeholders involved in the consultation.

3.16 The process was initiated with a literature review to gain a better understanding of progress in this area to date and to consider key data and management information. This process helped to inform the development of the research tools and took account of specific circumstances and areas that had been identified by previous research.

3.17 The second stage of the research was a series of focus groups and one-to-one interviews with learners in three FE colleges – Coleg Glan Hafren, Coleg Gwent and Swansea College and three Work Based Learning Providers – ACT training, Protocol Skills and Prp Training to discuss their learning experience.

3.18 The final stage of the research was telephone interviews with ten key stakeholders. The purpose of this element of the consultation was to identify the experience/awareness of BME learner needs and how they were/could be addressed more effectively.

3.19 Each element of the research is discussed in turn in the next three sections. The key messages are explored in the final section, culminating in a series of conclusions and recommendations.

4 LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

- 4.1 There is a significant body of research that relates to the educational experiences and attainment of BME pupils and students in England. Whilst there have been a number of detailed reports in recent years, Welsh research in this area has nevertheless been conducted on a much smaller scale and specific studies relating to the learning experience, achievement and motivations of post 16 learners (not including HE) in Wales is even more scarce.
- 4.2 As a result, this short literature review draws on published research conducted in Scotland, Wales and England in the last ten years. It considers 35 pieces of literature – 11 of which are specific to Wales. The review draws out recurring themes that could be addressed within this research project. These themes are reported on in the following sections of this report.

Limitations of the Research

- 4.3 The following considerations must be taken into consideration when examining this body of literature, and in relating it to the Welsh context:
- research conducted in England and Scotland is specific to the context within those localities – for example the size, composition, geographical spread;
 - socio-economic position of BME groups in Scotland or England does not necessarily mirror those in Wales, for example it is argued that in Scotland the BME population on average does not experience the same levels of deprivation as those in England, and such factors are likely to affect the educational context differently;
 - specific Welsh studies could be limited by their small scale, both in geographical coverage and/or number of BME learners involved and this will limit validity of assuming that results/outcomes apply to the wider BME group;

- some of the smaller pieces of research, regardless of the location, could be based on largely untested assumptions about underachievement and cultural or linguistic problems.

4.4 All of these factors must serve to caution researchers and policy makers in extrapolating or applying findings from other research or literature to the Welsh context without careful consideration of the validity of doing so.

Structure of the Review

4.5 The issues that relate to the learning experiences and education of BME individuals are varied and the categories that have been used for examining the literature are drawn from the key objectives of this piece of research. The six areas are:

- Participation and Completion Rates;
- Qualifications and Attainment;
- Learning Routes/Subject Areas;
- Barriers to Learning;
- Addressing the Needs of BME learners;
- Good Practice Examples.

4.6 The remainder of this section will look at each one of the categories based on the Welsh studies and then the wider UK research, and the related key points that can be drawn from the literature.

Participation and Completion rates

4.7 The Lifelong Learning Wales Record (LLWR) collates detailed information on equality related fields and so that the participation rates of BME learners in sixth forms, FE colleges and WBL provision can be analysed. This data is discussed and referred to in the Starkey report (6)² and ELWa's Equal Opportunities Annual Report 2004-05 (3) and shows that BME learner participation has increased since 2000 in FE and WBL provision.

² the number in brackets relates to the number which identifies the research report/study in the reference section located in Appendix B

- 3.8% of FE learners and 4.2% of sixth form learners are from a BME background – in both cases this is higher than within the Welsh population at large;
 - 1.6% of WBL learners are from a minority group – this is slightly less than the 2.1% of the BME population in Wales.
- 4.8 At a local level, the monitoring report from Coleg Glan Hafren (11) concurs with representation nationally and shows that the percentage of BME learners on full time and part time courses is significantly higher than the percentage of BME people within Cardiff.
- 4.9 Their data also analysed the completion rates across curriculum areas and by ethnicity and showed that rates were highest amongst Pakistanis and Indians (both at 76.7%) and the lowest completion figures were from Black Other (47.8%) and the Mixed White Caribbean (52.8%) students.

UK wide research

- 4.10 The Powney report (24), which reviews the education of BME groups in Scotland, cited research that ranked post-16 participation rates and found that the following stayed on in full time education:
- 82% of Chinese young people;
 - 72% of “other Asian” young people;
 - 68% of Indian young people;
 - 67% of Black African young people;
 - 57 % of Pakistani young people;
 - 53% of Bangladeshi young people;
 - 48% of Black Caribbean young people.
- 4.11 All these BME groups were more likely than White students to remain in education at age 19 and the research proposed that these higher participation rates were as a result of a greater commitment to education and the view that qualifications were the best route to a successful career.

Qualifications and Attainment

- 4.12 The EALAW Research Study Report (28) examined the attainment of BME pupils in Wales and their data identified that BME pupils, as a group, have a lower attainment at Key Stages 1-4 compared to the national figures. The report also detailed a variety of attainment patterns between ethnic groups with variations of up to 30% in some cases.
- 4.13 The information within Starkey's report (6) identified a higher percentage of BME people (20.5%) with no qualifications than the Welsh average of 17.3% and a lower proportion qualified to NVQ level 2 (59.7% compared to 64.95 average). However, the percentage of people from BME backgrounds qualified to NVQ level 4 is higher (32%) when compared to the Welsh average of just under a quarter of the population (24.2%).
- 4.14 The local data within Coleg Glan Hafren's report (11) highlighted a complex picture of attainment by ethnic group and college course. Nevertheless overall figures showed that students who identified themselves as Mixed White Asian received the highest passes at 69% and Pakistani, Indian and Mixed White Caribbean had attainment results that exceeded or matched college benchmarks. The lowest attainment rates were for the Mixed Black African group with pass rates averaging 40% and students from Chinese, Bangladeshi and Mixed White and Black Caribbean backgrounds do significantly worse than the college average.

UK wide research

- 4.15 The Oxford Review Article (15) identified British-Chinese pupils as the most likely high-achievers within the education system, outperforming all other BME groups at GCSE level. It also stated that a high proportion of this group of students will progress into post-compulsory education.
- 4.16 Tikly et al (23) considered the educational needs of mixed heritage pupils and identified that the attainment of White/Black Caribbean pupils in secondary schools was below average, the attainment of White/Black African pupils was slightly below average and the attainment of White/Asian pupils was above average.

- 4.17 In contrast Diriye (31) emphasised the educational underachievement of Somali children drawing attention to the significant decline in performance from the early years to the last year in school.
- 4.18 The DfES research paper on Ethnicity and Education (20) recognised that Indian, Chinese, White/Asian and Irish pupils were more likely to gain five or more GCSEs. Whereas Gypsy/Roma pupils, Travellers of Irish Heritage, Black Caribbean and White/Black Caribbean pupils were amongst the lower achieving pupils at Key Stage 4.
- 4.19 When considering employability, the Cabinet Office report (26) summarised that individuals from some BME groups, like Pakistanis, Bangladeshis and Black Caribbeans, “disproportionately lack the education, skills and qualifications that are essential for success in the labour market”.

Learning Routes/Subject Areas

- 4.20 The Cardiff and Vale Destinations Report (27) acknowledged that, overall, more BME school leavers (84.6%) opted to remain in education compared to their white counterparts (76.7%) but that this rate varied between BME groups which ranged from 100% of Chinese school leavers staying on in education compared to 61% of Black Caribbean.
- 4.21 For those who went on to study at Coleg Glan Hafren (11) their local data identified the most popular courses amongst BME students as Business and ICT related subjects.
- 4.22 Starkey’s report for ELWa (6) highlighted that the majority of learners on WBL programmes were on youth programmes and within different ethnic minority groups, learners from Black or Asian backgrounds were more likely to be on Skillbuild.

UK wide research

- 4.23 The Youth Cohort Studies (5 & 16), longitudinal studies produced for the DfES which examine activities, experiences and patterns of participation post-16 identified that young people from BME groups are more likely to be in full time education with Indians the most likely (92%) group.
- 4.24 This is supported by research which shows that a smaller proportion follow work-based routes. The evidence report (34) for the DfES identified that four per cent of Advanced Modern Apprenticeships started in 2001/2 were by people from BME groups and whilst these figures vary across the sectors (e.g. Childcare 8%, Construction 1%) the proportions had remained the same over a four-year period.
- 4.25 Under representation of BME young people in the apprenticeship sector was also identified in a 1997 Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) report (35) on Modern Apprenticeships (MAs). A further report (32) from that Department highlighted that BME young people on work-based training were less likely to enter employment and fall behind their White counterparts in achieving “positive outcomes”. This report also looked at the common experience of BME groups leaving the New Deal Gateway and found that an unknown destination was higher for BME groups in aggregate (24%) and each of the individual BME groups than for the White group (15%).
- 4.26 These studies support Starkey’s (6) observations and identify that White young people are more likely to be in government supported training and, with the exception of Pakistanis, BME learners were more likely than White learners, to be studying for a qualification.
- 4.27 The Youth Cohort Studies (5 & 16) also estimated that 12% of all 18 year olds are not in employment, education or training (NEET) but this percentage is higher for Black young people with 17% falling into the NEET category.
- 4.28 The LSC survey in West Yorkshire (32) indicated that computing skills among the Bangladeshi community are amongst the lowest. It was found that Bangladeshi males often worked within the family restaurant business and did not feel the need to access employment or training externally.

4.29 With regard to subject areas, the Oxford Review (15) identified that British-Chinese students have a general liking for more traditional subjects like science, IT and mathematics.

Barriers to Learning

4.30 Across the body of the literature that has been reviewed there are recurring themes that are identified as barriers to learning. In the National Adult Literacy Agency research report³ barriers were categorised under four headings:

- dispositional barriers e.g. motivations and aspirations to learn as well as past experience of education systems;
- informational barriers e.g. lack of appropriate information;
- institutional barriers e.g. structures, procedures, settings in which learning is delivered;
- situational barriers e.g. the cost of learning, family commitments, time to study.

4.31 The Welsh and UK-wide literature identifies a series of barriers that BME learners faced and these have been placed under the four headings.

Dispositional Barriers

4.32 The EALAW report (28) identified a number of factors that impact on the achievement of ethnic minority learners that fall within this category. Personal issues such as identity and the need for this to be encouraged and recognised within a learning environment are cited as factors in encouraging ethnic minority learners. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) research (14) considered identity crisis and the potential conflict of “being caught between the two cultures” as a significant barrier to learning.

³ National Adult Literacy Agency research (1998) referred to in the NFER Basic Skills and Key Skills Review of International Literature Final Report 2003

- 4.33 Diriye (30) explored the specific experience of Somali learners who have been affected by the impact of the civil war and the trauma surrounding their route to arriving in the UK and the effect that had on their ability to effectively learn.
- 4.34 The EALAW report (28) also highlighted that language related issues i.e. level of proficiency in English, specific linguistic differences and the confusion that can be caused by having to learn in and through two different languages, as a key factor in the achievement of individual learners. The ELWa Insight – Asylum Seekers and Refugees (9) identified lack of stability (applying to stay in the country and awaiting decisions) and past experience of education as specific challenges for Asylum Seekers and Refugees.
- 4.35 The LSC survey (31) considered barriers to the job market amongst young people in the Pakistani community such as lack of experience or training. The survey suggested that further education could be the main route for catching up with White counterparts.
- 4.36 The West Wales TEC and Swansea Bay REC report (33) identified the lack of qualification as the main barrier to employment, followed by relevant experience. This research reported that whilst the BME respondents had degrees or educational qualifications from their country or origin they were often not recognised in this country.
- 4.37 The DfEE report (35) identified some dispositional barriers to BME people taking up MAs as attitudes towards vocational training and the social pressure from their parents and peers to continue in education and inadequate qualifications to enter programmes e.g. employers in more “technical” sectors often selected based on qualifications of their own entrance tests which, the report identified, were felt not to “suit people from ethnic minorities”.

Informational Barriers

- 4.38 For certain groups like asylum seekers and refugees, receiving appropriate information and guidance about the services available to them and the learning that they can access is a significant challenge (ELWa Insight - 16). Even groups within BME communities with established links experience significant barriers.

- 4.39 The JRF work (14) highlighted the lack of representation for young people when local discussions between providers and their community occurs with the established and older members of the community bypassing any input consultation with young people on future policies and practice.
- 4.40 Many of the reports on achievement of BME learners identify expectations as an important element. A number of studies - EALAW (28), Insight 16 (10) Powney (24) have highlighted that the parents of BME pupils/students have high expectations of their children and stress the importance of getting a good education or going on to college or University. However, Powney (24) identified studies that show that parents do not receive the necessary information from teachers and educational professionals to advise their children to make appropriate decisions.

Institutional Barriers

- 4.41 Elements within educational settings and institutions can reduce participation and achievement amongst learners. These barriers can take the form of the structures, procedures, settings etc in which learning is delivered.
- 4.42 The EALAW report (28) recognised that the stereotyping of certain ethnic minority groups, e.g. as hardworking or disruptive, can influence teachers/lecturers approach to some learners which students can perceive and often respond to. This is supported by research into British-Chinese pupils. This study (15) identified some teachers' perceptions of Chinese girls as 'oppressed at home' and therefore 'quiet' and 'passive' in the class which affected their style of teaching.
- 4.43 These perceptions and also the expectations of teaching staff are referred to by the JRF research (14) which stated that teachers often have very low expectations of young Bangladeshi school/college achievement. Tikly et al (23) pointed to low teacher expectations of mixed heritage pupils which resulted from stereotypical views of confusion around their identity and being raised in a fragmented home. Powney (24) reinforced the view that, whilst teaching staff might be genuinely committed to equality ideals, their educational expectations of specific BME groups, e.g. African-Caribbean, was often low.

- 4.44 For asylum seekers, their ability to access particular forms of education and learning are limited by the immigration policies. Teaching styles can also impact on the pace and success of learning for asylum seekers and refugees and other BME groups - ELWa Insight (9), Cabinet Office (26) particularly when there has been no previous experience of formal education and the teaching is based on unfamiliar cultural norms and points of reference.
- 4.45 In work-based training programmes, the DfEE's MA report (35) perceived one barrier as employer discrimination or lack of awareness and that certain barriers applied more strongly to specific BME groups. For example, some employers believed that young black males were less qualified and young people of first generation Somalis, Yemeni, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis were thought to be more likely to have language problems and therefore difficulties in the workplace.

Situational Barriers

- 4.46 Socio-economic factors are recognised across the literature as a key barrier to participation and achievement in learning. The EALAW report (28) identified parental education, free school meal entitlement and social class as influencers in this area.
- 4.47 Others, like JRF (14), identified that the location of BME individuals'/families' homes can be highly segregated, leading to social exclusion and limiting life opportunities and therefore learning. Diriye (30) also pointed to home life but focused on the overcrowding in properties where Somali families might live resulting in the children/students from having little or no space to organise their learning materials. All these factors, plus unemployment and social class, are highlighted in Powney's report (24) as influencers of educational activity and attainment.
- 4.48 Some reports, (EALAW - 28, Diriye - 30, Powney et al - 24, Cabinet Office - 27) emphasised the impact that racism and discrimination can have on individuals, particularly when this has been experienced in a learning environment. They concluded that the way in which racism and discrimination is handled in schools, FE colleges, workplaces etc affected the learners attitudes and relationships to the institutions and their tutors/teachers.

4.49 Distraction and peer pressure have been cited as potential barriers to learning for some pupils and students from BME backgrounds. This is identified in the EALAW report (28), Tikly et al research (23) and the Cabinet Office report (26) and they suggest that this can lead to disruption in the learning environment and impact on the individual's progress and educational achievement.

4.50 Traditions like specific gender roles within families, or extended visits to home countries can limit some from regularly accessing educational provision (EALAW - 28, ELWa Learning Insight - 9, JRF- 14).

Addressing the Needs of BME Learners

4.51 The EALAW report (28) provided a number of suggestions for addressing the needs of BME learners. These included:

- training for teaching staff on cultural diversity to increase awareness and reduce misunderstanding;
- clear and appropriate policies and procedures for dealing with racist behaviour and incidents;
- proactivity in working with parents, encouraging greater participation and developing appropriate forms of communication;
- increased awareness amongst teaching staff of BME pupils' backgrounds, home languages, previous education to inform their teaching and pastoral support.

4.52 The ELWa Learning Insight on Asylum Seekers and Refugees (9) identified increased partnership work with providers of services to this group so that a comprehensive approach is followed that provides access to information and available services.

UK wide research

4.53 The HMI report (1) identified a series of steps that the FE sector could pursue to increase race equality within their institutions. A key factor was the leadership of the principal and senior managers in establishing a college-wide ethos of equality and aspirations for all.

- 4.54 It also recognised the need for more robust procedures for monitoring and analysing data that could inform planning and fully meet the needs of BME learners. Insight 16 (29) flagged up similar issues for establishing an inclusive and enabling ethos – committed leadership, appropriate staff development and a curriculum that acknowledges cultural, racial, faith and linguistic diversity.
- 4.55 The West Yorkshire LSC report (31) added that cultural and religious knowledge and awareness of education and training providers needs to be improved if more people from BME groups are to be encouraged into learning. This is echoed by the JRF research (14) into the experiences of Bangladeshi young people. It calls for policies and professional development to challenge stereotyping (specifically of Bangladeshi young men) and a greater understanding of the impact of race and ethnicity on the lives of young people.
- 4.56 These sentiments are expressed in the Cabinet Office report (26) where they propose that teaching staff should receive more information and better training on how to successfully teach a diverse intake of students/pupils. Similar views are also held by Tikly et al (23) and the Cabinet Office report (26) when outlining effective practice for raising achievement of White/Black Caribbean pupils.

Good Practice Examples

- 4.57 A number of case studies were identified in the UK-wide literature as examples of effective practice in engaging BME learners or increasing attainment levels amongst students. Amongst the examples identified in the HMI Report - Race Equality in Further Education (1) were:
- 4.58 Tameside College's - project to raise the achievement of Pakistani and Bangladeshi heritage learners

This FE College in Greater Manchester conducted research that identified one of the causes of underachievement in its Pakistani and Bangladeshi heritage students as the home-college liaison. Therefore bilingual 'achievement workers':

- *called on parents at home to inform them of opportunities to visit the college;*
- *organised seminars for parents in local community centres on key curriculum issues;*
- *translated key college correspondence;*
- *set up a college base where they could meet parents.*

Specific support was also targeted on learners at risk of underachieving with academic progress, punctuality, attendance and attainment closely monitored by the project team in partnership with the teaching staff.

After three years the retention rate had risen for Bangladeshi and Pakistani learners and the pass rates for both groups, previously quite low rose to about the college average.

4.59 Warwickshire College's – Work with the Community

Warwickshire FE College maintains strong links with community and employer based provision. For example it:

- *offers family learning courses for Sikh community centre foster good race relations and improve opportunities particularly for women.*
- *has participated in a collaborative bid to the local LSC and FE and HE providers to fund a 'widening participation' initiative aimed at 13-17 year olds from all backgrounds but particularly African-Caribbean young people, to consider progressing to HE in engineering;*
- *provides courses in the workplace of a major food producing company, including basic skills for over 50 Asian learners, and legislative programmes in food safety for those whose first language is not English.*

4.60 There appears to be a significant number of initiatives based in HE that are aimed at encouraging Years 9 -11 to consider the option of further and in particular higher education. A number of examples of good practice that were identified in the Ethnic Minorities and the Labour Market Report (26) that focused on schools. The Tower Hamlets Education Business Partnership (EBP) mentoring scheme is one of them.

The Tower Hamlets EBP mentoring scheme operates in a very diverse community. Seventy per cent of pupils registered in Tower Hamlets schools are from BME groups, with Bangladeshis making up over half the total school roll.

The mentoring scheme aims to improve the awareness of career opportunities and develop key employability skills of Year 10 students. Mentees are matched with business mentors based in the City of London and the mentors provide a perspective of employment in the City and the opportunities available post-16. Mentees report:

- an increased knowledge of job opportunities*
- better awareness of the academic qualifications necessary for desired careers.*
- development of key skills which include team working in small groups, time management and ability to prioritise their own workload.*

Summary

4.61 The literature highlights some patterns in the participation, educational achievement and learning routes of pupils and students from different BME groups. It clearly exposes the fact that learners from BME backgrounds are not a homogenous group and that different approaches need to be pursued to address some of the inequalities that appear to be present in the education and training system.

4.62 There is, without doubt, plenty of scope for further research to be conducted in this complex area, for example potential barriers to participation, learning routes, educational outcomes for BME learners, etc, and for studies that are specific to Wales. However, the research does highlight some key areas that could be addressed to assist learners in more effectively progressing along their chosen route and also points to practical examples where institutions have taken steps to better meet the needs of their BME learners.

5 LEARNER CONSULTATIONS

Participants

- 5.1 Key contacts within the six institutions/organisations participating in the research identified a total of 50 BME learners to participate in the consultations.
- 5.2 The learners were consulted through a combination of one-to-one interviews and mini-focus groups and Table 5.1 offers a breakdown of learners by FE institution and WBL provider. A summary of the learners' profiles, e.g. age, learning programme, ethnicity etc, can be found in Appendix A and it shows that participants spoke more than 17 languages, and had a range of aspirations from becoming genetic engineers to estate agents.

Table 5.1		
<i>Institution Type</i>	<i>Institution</i>	<i>Learners</i>
FEI	Coleg Glan Hafren	17 learners
FEI	Coleg Gwent	9 learners
FEI	Swansea College	17 learners
WBL	ACT Ltd	5 learners
WBL	Protocol Skills	2 learners
WBL	Prp Training	2 learners
Totals	6	50 learners

Limitations of the Research

- 5.3 The consultation occurred with 50 learners from a diverse range of BME backgrounds and whilst our research will reflect the aspirations, motivations and learning experiences, this will not necessarily be representative of their specific BME group. These individual accounts will be influenced by other aspects of the learner's life, for example, religion, generation, age, gender, area they live/study, and so we will avoid making any generalisations about the ethnic minority group as a whole.

- 5.4 It is also important to note that the learners that were involved in this research are clearly participating in learning or training and therefore are likely to have overcome the perceived and actual barriers that prevent potential learners from BME backgrounds entering into education and training. This fact is important when considering some of the responses.
- 5.5 The three FE institutions and the three WBL providers involved in this study equate to a very small number of providers in their sector and are not necessarily representative of counterparts operating in the same field. For example, two of the colleges have a significant number of BME students and they also have policies and practices in place that are likely to differ significantly from other FE Colleges and therefore the learning experience of their students might not be typical for BME students in other parts of the country.
- 5.6 In addition, this research did not explore the training and education provision delivered to BME learners by other providers, e.g. community based organisations and the anecdotal evidence from the stakeholder consultations identified a number of programmes and courses designed to address the learning and training needs of BME individuals.
- 5.7 Nevertheless, the research does provide a good indication of some of the learning experiences of individuals from the three colleges and three WBLs that will assist in identifying barriers and challenges faced by the wider BME learner groups and could lead to recommendations for improvements to their learning experience.

Learner Experiences

- 5.8 The accounts of the experiences of learners were very varied and reflected their diverse backgrounds, aspirations and educational achievements to date. There were also three types of learners involved in the research – college students on mainstream courses, students accessing English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) programmes and learners receiving WBL training.
- 5.9 The learners' experiences will be considered against these learner types but also against the following four headings:

- sources of advice and information;
- influencing factors on the decision to study/train;
- specific FE/WBL experience;
- challenges/barriers to learning.

Sources of Advice and Information

5.10 The students on mainstream college courses consistently identified a small number of key sources that they used when seeking advice about post-16 education and training. These were predominantly careers advisors/teachers at school, their parents or their friends.

5.11 In comparison, the learners on ESOL courses, who were predominantly recent arrivals to the country and without established ties, had all found out about the programme by word of mouth. The only exception was one student who had been referred by the Refugee Centre.

5.12 The learners on the WBL programmes who had sought out information about the training programmes identified just two sources – Youth Gateway and Careers Wales.

5.13 So, it is clear that advice and guidance for these learners considering training, FE courses or ESOL programmes came from a small and limited range of sources.

WBL Provider – Learner

‘Carl⁴ is 18 and was born in Wales. He describes his ethnicity as Black Caribbean as his family originates from Barbados. He attended school at St David’s College in Cardiff where he studied for his GCSEs. Carl did not achieve the grades he wanted to fulfil his place at college so he decided to enrol on the Skillbuild Plus programme at ACT training, a work-based learning provider.

Carl would like a job in IT as he has an interest in this area particularly as this is what his dad does. Carl had discussed his career options with his family and girlfriend though ultimately made his own decision about his training. Although Carl would have preferred to go to college, he believes Skillbuild was a good decision for him as it is providing him with the skills he needs to pursue a future career in IT.

He is hoping to gain a work placement soon as part of the programme. He is still considering applying to college again for an IT related course.

Influencing Factors

5.14 Learners’ decisions to study or train were affected by a number of considerations, some of which were very specific to particular types of learners and others that related to individual circumstances.

5.15 For ESOL students there was one overriding factor – the desire to learn English. They saw this as the route to improving their situation and becoming more involved in society and perceived long term benefits in terms of further study and employment possibilities. For those students who were asylum seekers, and whose activity was restricted because of their status, it offered them a real opportunity to learn and socialise with others in similar situations.

5.16 For work based learners, the advice provided by Youth Gateway or Careers Wales was influential and for some, e.g. those on Skillbuild there was no other choice but to enter a WBL programme. Some learners also cited encouragement by family members as an important factor when deciding to embark on a training programme as they felt that this was the best way to secure future employment.

⁴ Name has been changed

WBL Provider – Learner

Gabi is Polish and aged 25. She came to Wales last year with a friend in order to improve her English, gain some different work experience and potentially gain employment in Wales or elsewhere in the UK.

Gabi attended school and University in Poland where she gained an MA in Social Care. She applied to work in Wales via a Polish company who source jobs and training opportunities for Polish nationals.

Gabi now works in a restaurant in Tenby whilst undertaking English lessons and a Foundation Modern Apprenticeship which is a condition of her place on the Polish Scheme. Gabi is interested in doing further courses or qualifications at the local college or University but must first achieve the 'English for Academic Courses' qualification.

Gabi has found staff at both the hotel and her work-based learning provider, PRP Training, very supportive and flexible and does not believe her ethnicity is hindering her training or progress.

5.17 When reaching the decision to attend their specific college, students taking mainstream courses were influenced by a range of factors that included:

- entry requirements;
- the college's reputation;
- timetabling and choice of courses;
- existing connections with the college through friends/siblings;
- location of the college;
- school-college partnership;
- specific facilities, e.g. sports academy;
- friends/parents encouragement.

5.18 A combination of these factors influenced the learners decision to study but the key element was the students' future ambitions. All the learners had plans for their future that related to further study or employment within a chosen field.

FE College – Learner

Maria is a mature student from Hong Kong and moved over to Cardiff in 2003 with her son who is completing his higher education here. Her husband also moved to Wales, once he had secured a job.

Maria's first language is Cantonese and she was at the ESOL centre near the college when she saw a brochure advertising the courses available in Coleg Glan Hafren. She wanted to pursue formal training, had always been interested in hairdressing and knew that studying would help to improve her English and increase her interaction with local people and wider society.

With her family commitments, Maria had to consider whether she would have the time to study on a full time course, but with encouragement from her husband, Maria enrolled with the college. Returning to study was quite a challenge but she enjoys the course which is quite varied and covers six key skills as well as the core hairdressing elements.

Maria reads all the course materials in advance to aid her understanding and one of her biggest challenges is to fully understand some of the tutors (and classmates) because of their accents and the speed at which they talk. However, Maria does receive support from college staff – the librarians and the learning centre staff are very helpful and one tutor meets with her and goes through the materials and explains particular words.

Once the course is completed, Maria intends to become a hairdresser.

Specific College/WBL Experience

- 5.19 All the learners stated that they had not experienced any harassment or direct discrimination, from either their fellow students or tutors, whilst training or studying (this was contradicted however by the examples some respondents provided which are covered later in this section).
- 5.20 ESOL students were particularly grateful for the learning opportunity that they had been given and a number of them commented on the kindness of the teaching staff in comparison to what they had previously experienced.
- 5.21 Most of the colleges students appreciated the independence and respect that was afforded to them and enjoyed the more relaxed approach that the colleges pursued. Some students did highlight the initial challenge of settling into FE and the transition from school but acknowledged that induction weeks, orientation days and open evenings had made the move much easier.

FE College – Learner

Grace is aged 16 and attends Coleg Glan Hafren where she is studying A/S levels in government and politics. She has lived in Cardiff with her brothers and stepmother since the age of 13 and was born in the Republic of Congo and moved to Wales because of the political situation in the country.

After completing her GCSEs at Willows High School, Grace decided to continue her studies at college where the learning environment would be different and because she wanted a change of scene. It has taken a little bit of time for Grace to adjust – her studies are delivered from two different college sites and she needs to be very organised to travel between locations and arrive in time for classes.

Grace much prefers the more relaxed atmosphere in college, compared to school, and feels that all the students are treated like adults – this means you have to be very self-disciplined and motivated – which can sometimes be a challenge.

Grace has not experienced any direct racism from other college students or tutors and finds most people friendly and approachable. If Grace encounters any difficulties with her course or other issues, then there is support available from her form tutor. If her studies progress well Grace would like to continue on to University and do a course that uses her language skills (her first language is French and she is fluent in English) and that could allow her to eventually work in the diplomatic service.

Challenges and Barriers to Learning/Training

- 5.22 The learners involved in this research identified a series of challenges that they faced. Most of these were ones that any learner has to address and did not relate to the learners' cultures, ethnicity or religious beliefs.
- 5.23 For ESOL students a key challenge was the content of the ESOL course and in some cases the traditional method of delivery. They sometimes found it hard to relate to the teaching aids and suggested that using local information as part of the content of the materials might increase interest, and provide ESOL students with additional local information. IT was recognised as an important skill by most of the learners and learners felt they needed more opportunity and time to develop their skills in computer use.

FE College – Learner

Claude is 27 and is an asylum seeker who was advised by the Refugee Centre of the ESOL course at Coleg Gwent.

Claude is from Burundi, his first language is French and since he started on the ESOL course his English has improved significantly “when I started in October I couldn’t even make a sentence. Today I can speak!”

Claude would like to more opportunities to use his English but because of his status he is restricted by what he is allowed to do but is keen to become more involved in college activities and events. “I don’t know about student groups. I would like to participate but I don’t know how”.

Claude feels respected by students and staff and is “wowed” by the teacher who he says is excellent at teaching and caring for her students.

He believes that “many people don’t know what is an asylum seeker and the barriers go up. They are suspicious and think that we are bad or steal” and thinks that the College and others could do more to raise awareness and increase understanding of asylum seekers.

Claude would eventually like to continue his studies and become an engineer – in the meantime, to show his appreciation of the opportunity he has been given and to further improve his English he has applied to the Red Cross as a volunteer.

- 5.24 Learners on WBL programmes had very positive comments to make about the WBL providers and the challenges they faced involved their employer rather than the learning experience. A couple of learners felt the employer was a little aggressive towards them but attributed this to being on the Skillbuild programme “we’re cheap labour” rather than anything that was related to their ethnicity or religion.
- 5.25 One Muslim work based learner did identify a challenge that was specific to his religion. Working a full day and performing efficiently, fasting during Ramadan presented the learner with challenges which he felt his employer did not understand or acknowledge.
- 5.26 The learners in FE colleges identified some practical challenges that are, again, common to all students. One related to self-discipline and personal motivation to ensure that they attend classes regularly and punctually and organise their time to meet study deadlines.

- 5.27 Another key issue consistently raised was the cost of travel, entitlement to subsidised travel and free bus passes. The other common observation related to specific facilities or lack of them, on certain college sites.
- 5.28 College students did identify some issues that related to their ethnicity, culture or language abilities. A couple of learners expressed the desire for practical changes like Halal meat being made available in the canteen.
- 5.29 Other students raised issues about the approach or cultural awareness of teaching staff, mentioning the use of outdated terms when referring to BME groups or tutors making assumptions about students based on the colour of their skin.
- 5.30 A number of students whose first language was not English, but who were fluent in the language, identified difficulties in expressing themselves sufficiently in English to meet academic standards of work. Recent arrivals to the country also found it difficult to follow conversations if the tutor had strong accents or referred to examples that were specific to Welsh cultural norms.

Summary

- 5.31 The three types of learners provided accounts of their experiences and the decisions that led to selecting particular learning/training routes.
- 5.32 Their choices in study or training were varied and a range of factors influenced their individual decisions. Overall learners' experiences were positive and nearly all aspired to specific careers or further study. Issues raised concerning training/learning were often similar to ones which any student, regardless of their heritage, would identify, e.g. facilities, travel costs, transitions from school.
- 5.33 The diversity amongst the consultees, in terms of their backgrounds, aspirations, areas of study or training and identified barriers to learning reflect the individual circumstances that face the entire population of learners, and are not reflective of particular characteristics of BME learners.

5.34 However, common experiences were raised relating to culture, religious beliefs, ethnicity and language. This highlighted some of the barriers that are specific to BME learners only e.g. lack of awareness amongst teaching staff and styles and content of learning materials. This resonates with some of the areas highlighted in the literature review.

6 STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS

6.1 This section considers the responses from the discussions with key stakeholders from public sector and community sector organisations about their experience and awareness of learners from BME backgrounds.

6.2 Telephone consultations took place with key people in the following organisations:

- ELWa;
- FE college staff - Swansea College, Coleg Glan Hafren;
- WBL providers staff ACT training;
- Jobcentre Plus;
- Careers Wales – Cardiff & the Vale;
- Welsh Assembly Government;
- Swansea Bay Racial Equality Council;
- Caia Park Partnership;
- “The Parade” ESOL Learning Centre Cardiff;
- Ethnic Business Support Programme;
- LSDA.

Support to BME Learners

6.3 Consultations yielded a series of examples of how stakeholders were involved with supporting learners and potential learners from a BME background. These included:

- **Coleg Glan Hafren.** As part of the College’s commitment to meeting the needs of its diverse student population, CGH, commissioned research into the experiences of ethnic minority groups. The study identified areas of good practice and made recommendations to redress underachievement of some BME students. A number of elements have been introduced as a result:
 - work with schools, community organisations, staff and students to look at the barriers to learning of Bangladeshi, Black African, Mixed Black African Caribbean/White and Chinese students;
 - a pilot mentoring project for the four BME groups in partnership with Mentoring for All;
 - drop-in advice service in partnership with the City Centre Youth Project, Grassroots, and a student youth worker.

- **Swansea Bay REC.** This Racial Equality Council works in partnership with a range of bodies and one project involving partners like the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) and the Gwalia Housing Group, aimed at addressing the lack of opportunities for local and BME communities to train in building maintenance. Through the refurbishment of a vandalised three-bedroomed house on a local estate they:
 - developed practical building skills;
 - increased their self-esteem and employability;
 - improved links between people of different communities.

- **Caia Park Partnership.** In the last nine months, Wrexham has seen a significant influx of Polish migrant workers who are finding employment in the local industrial estates and who, in many cases are highly skilled, need to develop their English language skills. In response to this they have:
 - provided 10 ESOL courses for groups of workers and their family members to help them develop their language skills;
 - worked in partnership with the WEA and Yale College to look at routes for moving the learners from low skilled jobs into more appropriate employment that matches the previous employment experience.

- **Swansea College.** The College carries out a range of activities targeting BME learners. The two examples below highlight work with BME young women:
 - a range of ESOL and vocational courses are delivered in partnership with the Minority Ethnic Women’s Network where free childcare is also offered en site. These courses are often at a foundation level and offer a good progression route into other FE courses.
 - the college is part of the Reaching Higher, Reaching Wider partnership with MEWN and Swansea University. The programme aims to widen access into higher education for underrepresented groups of young people and to increase their educational aspirations. Part of the College’s role has been to set up a series of workshops for young BME women delivered by with guest speakers from BME communities to act as positive role models and then offered support and advice on progression routes to HE.

Areas for Future Consideration

- 6.4 These examples show that stakeholders consulted during this research have diverse roles – some provide direct services to learners, others develop policies and practices that support providers. As a result, their responses to questions about involvement with learners were extremely varied. Together though some common areas where improvements could be made to better meet the needs of BME learners were identified. These are discussed in the rest of this section.

Engagement with Local Communities

- 6.5 All the stakeholders, both public sector voluntary and community sector organisations expressed the need for more effective engagement and liaison with local BME communities and community organisations. They viewed the communities/organisations as a bridge to learners and potential learners and felt that increased involvement would improve understanding amongst providers and within communities if meaningful links could be established.

Building on Existing Partnerships

- 6.6 Connected to the above, consultees highlighted the opportunities to work with partner organisations who had established programmes, initiatives or relationships with communities or specific groups of learners. All stakeholders were able to identify pieces of work that were being delivered to targeted BME learners in response to a specific need, and recognised that improved links and connections could be made between organisations. This would assuage the problems associated with the piecemeal delivery of some services.

Funding

- 6.7 A number of stakeholders identified the current funding of provision as unequal. They called for a more equitable and transparent system for distributing funds to the four different types of post-16 funded learning⁵. They also emphasised the need to recognise the costs associated with providing appropriate services and effectively addressing specific barriers to participation and achievement. The specific difficulties around funding for particular provision e.g. for ESOL but not for English Support (alongside mainstream courses) was commented on by three stakeholders.

Informed Policy-making and Practice

- 6.8 Stakeholders stressed the importance of addressing race equality issues in the planning and policy development process. They recognised that race equality was frequently treated as a “bolt on” or addressed only when a “problem” was identified.
- 6.9 Nearly all the consultees commented on the legislative requirements under the amended Race Relations Act that now fell on FE colleges, public sector organisation etc. They felt that race equality obligations should be more closely addressed and that the monitoring and data collection activities, if applied effectively, could better inform decision making within each organisation.

Race Equality and Cultural Awareness

- 6.10 All consultees raised the issue of awareness amongst teaching, staff, policymakers and practitioners. It was acknowledged that cultural awareness training had been more widespread in recent years but that stereotyping and “a one size fits all” approach was still evident amongst key personnel involved in delivering or planning appropriate training and educational provision. Stakeholders felt strongly that this needed to be tackled.

⁵ excluding Higher Education

Impact of New Arrivals to Wales

- 6.11 Stakeholders all mentioned the challenge of meeting the needs of the more recent arrivals, particularly from the EU ascension states⁶ and the importance of staying abreast of current issues. These shifts affect the measures providers may put in place for learners, and need to be constantly updated. Currently providers are responding to the large number of migrant workers/learners from countries like Poland, however, five years ago they were preparing to accommodate the influx of Somalis who had arrived in Wales.
- 6.12 The lack of sufficient ESOL provision was regularly highlighted but a number of respondents commented on the effect that “new arrivals” had on more established BME groups. Several consultees felt that the needs of more settled BME communities were often overlooked in order to meet the very immediate and often more critical (due to just arriving in the country) needs of asylum seekers, refugees and migrant workers.

Communication

- 6.13 There was general recognition of the need to improve the:
- methods for disseminating the information;
 - format and relevant content of materials;
 - translation of materials into relevant community languages;
 - communication and information exchange between organisations providing services;
 - the relevance of the guidance and advice that was offered.
- 6.14 Nearly all the stakeholders recognised the role their own organisations could play in improving communication styles and content with existing learners, potential learners, local communities and partner organisations.

⁶ Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia

7 KEY MESSAGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

- 7.1 This was a small piece of research, delivered over a short time frame. A small sample of learners on training programmes and college courses in the South Wales and a number of stakeholders involved in supporting learners were consulted. On the basis of this sample, taking the caveats discussed in previous sections into account, the study has identified some key areas where FE colleges/WBLs, stakeholders and specifically WAG could improve the experiences of learners from BME groups.

Key Messages

- 7.2 There are a number of areas that could be developed to address issues that have emerged as part of this research. Some are specific to learning providers, others are pertinent to stakeholders who support services or development policies and most are applicable to both groups. These include:
- effective marketing and dissemination of information;
 - stronger links with local communities;
 - appropriate staff development and training;
 - informed policy making and practice.

Effective Marketing and Dissemination of Information

- 7.3 The learners consulted during this research identified their main sources of information about learning and training provision. Many relied on existing links with FE institution or direct advice from a careers or employment agency. There is clearly significant scope to increase awareness of post-16 choices through more creative forms of marketing, improved links with local community organisations and more thoughtful ways of extending messages and information into communities.

- 7.4 Similar actions apply to stakeholders when they are considering the form, content and method of marketing and promoting services to a diverse group of potential or existing learners. This means more variety across materials to reach a wider audience and practical considerations, such as the translation of key information into community languages.

Improved Links with Local Communities

- 7.5 To support more effective communication and to increase knowledge and awareness across providers and communities, improved and closer links with community and voluntary organisations is needed. For learning providers this could mean direct provision of learning within the community, specific awareness raising and promotional activities to community/voluntary sector groups or increased liaison and partnerships with local schools to aid transition to college.

Appropriate Staff Training and Development

- 7.6 This research and other studies have highlighted the negative impact on learners and organisations of teaching staff/policymakers/practitioners that have a low awareness of issues facing BME communities and/or inaccurate or stereotypical views of particular BME groups. This needs to be addressed with more thorough training and professional development so that policy makers and practitioners are better equipped to develop and deliver culturally sensitive services which recognise the diversity amongst their learners.

Informed Policy Making and Practice

- 7.7 In order for policies to be appropriate and relevant policy makers need to have a greater understanding and awareness of BME needs and issues facing communities and appropriateness of current service provision. This can only be achieved by addressing some of the areas identified above and with more accurate use of data and information relating to the impact of policies, e.g. the patterns in performance and participation of learners.

- 7.8 The collection of monitoring information is very common and more attention needs to be given to the use of this data. Analysis and interpretation of information alongside qualitative materials - surveys, feedback, observation etc - is key to assessing progress and ensuring an effective evaluation of programmes, policies and initiatives. This will in turn lead to the development of more appropriate future policies and practice.

Suggestions for Future Research

- 7.9 The scarcity of Wales-specific studies examining the needs of BME learners clearly leaves scope for expanding the research base in a number of areas. These could be in any one of the “Areas for Consideration” that were identified in Section 6. However we identify three specific elements as potential areas for further investigation.

Perceived Barriers for Potential Learners from BME backgrounds

- 7.10 This research project consulted with learners who, as evidenced by their participation, are in the education system and likely to have already overcome potential barriers to participation in learning and training. Therefore research could look at the experiences, employment/training/educational histories of BME people not on training or learning programmes. This could be BME young people in the NEET group or BME learners who have dropped out of training programmes or educational courses and examine the reasons why they are no longer, or have not been, engaged in activity in these areas.
- 7.11 This work would help to increase understanding of the particular challenges faced by potential learners and learners from BME backgrounds and could assist in improving and identifying ways to address the needs of, and deliver appropriate services to, BME learners.

WBL provision and BME learners

- 7.12 Only WBL provision had a lower percentage of BME participants than were present in the population as a whole. The majority of studies focus on school, sixth form and FE college education. Research into the effective ways to encourage more BME learners into WBL provision, through providing appropriate advice and guidance on vocational options or examining potential barriers to participation or the appropriateness of the WBL provision would fill a gap in existing literature and research.

Embedding Equalities into FE College Ethos

- 7.13 The Race Relations legislation placed specific responsibilities on FE Colleges to address the needs of BME staff and students and to monitor progress and achievement. WAG has recently asked providers to include, within their institutional plans, evidence of support mechanisms for BME learner. In common with other studies this research has identified, that commitment to equalities and leadership from principal and senior management is of primary importance in creating a college-wide ethos that encompasses the needs of learners from diverse backgrounds.
- 7.14 Research could be carried out with a cross section of FE Colleges to look at embedding equalities into learning environments and sharing practice that can be applied in the Welsh context.

Longitudinal Studies

- 7.15 The DfES conduct studies that look at youth cohorts in England and Wales, however, these still have an English-centric focus and there is an absence of comprehensive quantitative data and qualitative accounts that provide an accurate picture of post-16 learning amongst BME learners. Such research could inform strategic policy-making and local practice.

**APPENDIX A
LEARNER PROFILES**

Learners' Profiles

FEI/WBL FEI	Age	Gender	Ethnicity	Religion	First Language	Prior Activity	Highest Qualifications	Current Course	Future Ambition
CGH	16	Female	Black African	Christian	French	School	GCSEs A-C	AS Government & Politics	College
CGH	40+	Female	Chinese	Christian – Catholic	Cantonese	ESOL	Other	Hairdressing	Become a hairdresser
CGH	16	Male	Asian Welsh - Bangladeshi	Islam	English	School	GCSEs D-G	Intro to IT	Get a job in IT
CGH	17	Male	Asian Welsh - Bangladeshi	Islam	English	School	GCSEs D-G	Intro to IT	University
CGH	18	Female	Mixed - White and African Black	Christian	English	School	Welsh Bac	A Levels	University
CGH	17	Male	Black African - Somali	Islam	Somali	School	GCSEs A-C	A Levels	University
CGH	18	Male	British Welsh	Christian	Arabic	School	A levels	Business & Media Studies	University
CGH	16	Female	British African - Somali	Islam	Somali	School	GCSEs A-C	AS/A2 Course	University
CGH	16	Female	British African - Somali	Islam	Somali	School	GCSEs A-C	AS English Language, Biology, Chemistry	University
CGH	16	Female	Asian - Bangladeshi	Islam	Bangla	School	GCSEs D-G	GNVQ Health & Social Care Foundation	Study the Next Level
CGH	21	Male	Mixed - White and Black Caribbean	None	English	Working	NVQ L2	BTEC IT Practitioner	University
CGH	40	Male	Black African - Somali	Islam	Somali	NEET	Degree - Somalia	English, Computer	Learn More
CGH	17	Male	Mixed - White and Black Caribbean	Islam	English	School	GCSEs A-C	BTEC National Diploma in Sport Performance	University
CGH	16	Male	Mixed - White and Black Caribbean	Christian	English	School	GCSEs A-C	First Diploma in Sport	Become a Electrician or Plumber

Learners' Profiles

FEI/WBL FEI	Age	Gender	Ethnicity	Religion	First Language	Prior Activity	Highest Qualifications	Current Course	Future Ambition
CGH	18	Female	Chinese	None	Mandarin	College	Other	Level 2 Childcare and Education	Become a Nursery Nurse
CGH	19	Female	Black African - Somali	Islam	Somali	School	GCSEs A-C	AS Biology, Chemistry, Islamic Studies	Generic Engineering
CGH	18	Female	Black African - Somali	Islam	Somali	School	GCSEs A-C	AS Biology, Maths, Biology, Islamic Studies	University or Further Education
WBL									
Protocol	16	Male	Asian Welsh - Pakistani	Islam	English	School	GCSEs A-C	Skill Build	Don't Know
Protocol	16	Male	Mixed - White and Asian	Islam	English	Returned from Pakistan	None	Skill Build	Find a job
WBL									
PRP	25	Female	Polish	Christian - Roman Catholic	Polish	University	Degree - Poland	Foundation Modern Apprentice	University
PRP	25	Female	Polish	Christian - Roman Catholic	Polish	Working	Degree - Poland	Foundation Modern Apprentice	University
WBL									
ACT	17	Female	Asian - Bangladeshi	Islam	Bangla	Working	GCSEs A-C	Skill Build	Receive qualifications, get a job
ACT	55	Female	Asian	Hindu	Gujarati	Care responsibilities	None	Skill Build	Find a job
ACT	18	Male	Mixed - Other	None	English	College	GCSEs D-G	Skill Build +	IT Computing
ACT	16	Male	Black British	Islam	Somali	College	Other	Skill Build	Find a job
ACT	17	Male	Black English	None	English	College	NVQ L1	Skill Build	Become an estate agent
FEI									

Learners' Profiles

FEI/WBL FEI	Age	Gender	Ethnicity	Religion	First Language	Prior Activity	Highest Qualifications	Current Course	Future Ambition
Gwent	27	Male	Black African - Cameroon	Christian - Catholic	French	NEET	A levels	ESOL Skills for Life Entry 3	Engineering
Gwent	21	Female	Asian - Bangladeshi	Islam	Bangla	NEET	None	learndirect	Find a job
Gwent	26	Male	Mixed - White and Asian	Islam	Kurdish	NEET	None	learndirect	Find a job
Gwent	22	Female	Mixed - White and Black African	Christian - Catholic	Portuguese	NEET	None	learndirect	Find a job
Gwent	43	Male	Chinese Welsh	None	Mandarin	Working	None	ESOL	Find a job
Gwent	24	Male	Europe - Slovakian	Christian - Catholic	Slovak	Electrician	Other	English L1 and Auto Cad (Computer)	Don't know - depends on results
Gwent	27	Male	Black African	Islam	Bargo-Arabic	ESOL	None	ESOL	Engineering
Gwent	29	Male	Asian - Pakistani	Islam	Urdu, Punjabi	Working	Degree - Pakistan	ESOL Entry III	Improve English
Gwent	17	Male	Black African	Islam	Somali	NEET	None	Welding and ESOL	Welding
FEI									
Swansea	18	Male	Asian - Bangladeshi	Islam	Bangla and English	College	NVQ L2	Electronics	University
Swansea	19	Male	Asian - Bangladeshi	Bangladeshi	Bangla and English	College	NVQ L2	Electronics	University
Swansea	18	Male	Asian - Welsh	Islam	English	School	NVQ L2	Motor Vehicle	Work
Swansea	18	Female	Asian - Bangladeshi	Islam	Bangla	School	GNVQ	BTEC National Diploma in Business	Train in bank
Swansea	18	Female	Asian - Bangladeshi	Islam	Bangla and English	School	A levels	A levels	Gap year then university
Swansea	25	Male	Black - African	None	French	NEET	Degree - Africa	ESOL	Work
Swansea	17	Male	Asian - Bangladeshi	Islam	English	School	GCSEs A-C	Chemistry and English	University

Learners' Profiles

FEI/WBL FEI	Age	Gender	Ethnicity	Religion	First Language	Prior Activity	Highest Qualifications	Current Course	Future Ambition
Swansea		Female	Mixed - White and Asian	Islam	Turkish	College	None	ESOL	Find a job
Swansea	29	Female	Mixed - White and Asian	Christian	Farsi	College	None	ESOL	University
Swansea	21	Female	Mixed - White and Asian	Islam	Turkish	College	None	ESOL	Further study
Swansea		Female	Black African	Christian	French	Housewife	Other	ESOL	Find a job
Swansea		Female	Black African	Islam	Somali	Housewife	None	ESOL	Further study
Swansea	38	Female	Black English	Christian - Catholic	French	Housewife	Other	ESOL	Find a job
Swansea	29	Male	Asian - Bangladeshi	Islam	Bangla	College	Other	ESOL	Further study
Swansea	47	Male	Mixed - Other	None	Arabic, Germany, English	ESOL	None	ESOL	Further study
Swansea	33	Female	Mixed - White and Asian	Islam	Arabic	School	None	ESOL	Childcare or Hairdressing
Swansea	32	Female	Mixed - White and Asian	Islam	Arabic	School	None	ESOL	Chemistry

**APPENDIX B
REFERENCES**

- (1) **Her Majesty's Inspectorate.** *Race Equality in Further Education: Progress and Good Practice in Further Education colleges in response to the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.* Office for Standards in Education 2005
- (2) **Her Majesty's Inspectorate.** *Good Practice in Promoting Race Equality in Schools and Colleges.* Office for Standards in Education 2005
- (3) **Office for Standards in Education.** *Race Equality in Education: Good Practice in Schools and Local Education Authorities* 2005
- (4) **Education and Learning Wales.** *Equal Opportunities Annual Report 2004/05*
- (5) **Department for Education and Skills.** *Youth Cohort Study: Activities and Experiences of 17 year olds in England and Wales* 2005
- (6) **Starkey, J.** *Ethnicity and the Learning and Skills Sector in Wales.* Education and Learning Wales 2005
- (7) **Commission for Racial Equality.** *Annual Report for the Commission for Racial Equality in Wales* 2004
- (8) **Education and Learning Wales.** *National Learner Satisfaction Survey for Wales* 2003
- (9) **Ci Research.** *Learning Insight: Asylum Seekers and Refugees.* Education and Learning Wales 2005
- (10) **Learning and Skills Development Agency.** *LSC Equality and Diversity Strategy 2004-07* 2003
- (11) **Gordon French Associates.** *Report on the results of Ethnic Monitoring at Coleg Glan Hafren.* Coleg Glan Hafren 2005
- (12) **Education and Learning Wales.** *Learning Insight - Males aged 16-24*
- (13) **Universities UK and SCOP.** *From the margins to the Mainstream – embedding widening participation in Higher Education* 2005
- (14) **Mac an Ghail, M. and Haywood, C.** *Young Bangladeshi People's Experience of Transition to Adulthood,* Joseph Rowntree Foundation 2005
- (15) **Francis, B. and Archer, L.** 'British Chinese Pupils' Constructions of Gender and Learning'. *Oxford Review of Education* 2005
- (16) **Payne, J.** *Patterns of Participation in full time Education after 16: An Analysis of the England and Wales Youth Cohort Study.* RR307 Department for Education and Skills 2001

- (17) **Frost, S., Reiss, M. and Frost, J.** 'Count Me In! Gender and Ethnic Attainment in School Science' *School Science Review* March 2005
- (18) **Gardner, H. and Lanman, K.** *Living in Rural Wales: the Experiences of BME People in Carmarthenshire and Montgomeryshire*. Dyfed and Powys Race Equality Network 2006
- (19) **Gilborn, D and Mirza, H.** *Educational Inequality: Mapping Race, Class and Gender*. Office for Standards in Education 2000
- (20) **Department for Education and Skills.** *Ethnicity and Education: the Evidence on Minority Ethnic Pupils*. Research Topic Paper 01-05 2005
- (21) **Rice, C., McGregor, N., Thomson, H. and Udagawa, C.** **University of Abertay Dundee,** *National "English for Speakers of Other Languages" (ESOL) Strategy: Mapping Exercise and Scoping Study*. Scottish Executive 2005
- (22) **Universities Scotland.** *Greater Expectations: Widening Access and Raising Aspirations* 2005
- (23) **Tikly, L., Caballero, C. and Haynes, J.** **University of Bristol & Birmingham Local Education Authority** *Understanding the Educational Needs of Mixed Heritage Pupils*. Department for Education and Skills 2004
- (24) **Powney, J., McPake, J. Hall, S. and Lyall, L. – University of Glasgow.** *Education of Minority Ethnic Groups in Scotland: A Review of Research*. University of Glasgow 1998
- (25) **Schneider Ross.** *Towards Race Equality: An Evaluation of the public duty to promote race equality and good race relations in England and Wales*. Commission for Racial Equality 2002
- (26) **Strategy Unit.** *Ethnic Minorities and the Labour Market: Final Report*. Cabinet Office 2003
- (27) **The City and County of Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan:** *Pupil Destinations 2005*. Careers Wales Cardiff and Vale 2005
- (28) **EALAW.** *The Achievement of Ethnic Minority Pupils in Wales* Welsh Assembly Government 2003
- (29) **Scottish Executive Education Department.** *Insight 16 Minority Ethnic Pupils' Experiences of School in Scotland* 2005
- (30) **Diriye, A.** *The Ticking Timebomb – The Underachievement of Somali Children in British Schools* 2006
- (31) **Community Research Partnerships Ltd.** *The Ethnic Minorities Survey* Learning and Skills Council West Yorkshire 2003

(32) Owen, D., Green, A., Pitcher, J. and Maguire, M. *Race Research for the Future: Minority Ethnic Participation and Achievement in Education, Training and the Labour Market.* RR No. 225 Department for Education and Employment 2000

(33) West Wales TEC and Swansea Bay REC *Empowering Disadvantaged Ethnic Minority* 2000

(34) Bhattacharyya, G., Ison, L. and Blair, M. *Minority Ethnic Participation in Education and Training - The Evidence* RTP01-03 Department for Education and Skills 2003

(35) Department for Education and Employment *Study of Modern Apprenticeships and People from Ethnic Minorities* 1997