

Transport needs of Devon's Black and Minority Ethnic Population

Presented by: - Kevin McKenzie- Devon and Exeter Racial Equality Council

Background

(Presentation was based on surveys carried out through the 2002-03 Rural Outreach Project)
The needs of the Black and Minority Ethnic communities (BME) differ due to racial and ethnic variations. Since the 1991 census the ethnic population in Devon has doubled. Surveys carried out amongst the ethnic communities revealed public transport was one of the greatest areas of concern.

Key Issues Highlighted: -

1. Accessibility

Inaccessibility was identified as a key issue in the Black and Minority Ethnic communities.

2. Rural Isolation

Rural Isolation is a major issue amongst ethnic groups. Contrary to popular belief the majority of the BME populations (72%) are dispersed throughout rural areas. Thus good access to public transport is vital, as the majority of ethnic minority services are located in the city centres.

3. Communication

Communication is a barrier to access. Many black and ethnic groups do not have English as their first language. In Devon today Fifty-four languages other than English are spoken. For many BME English is not their first language. Over 20 % of the ethnic population have poor English skills. In some of the ethnic groups literacy rates are low.

4. Racial Incidents

Over 65% of those surveyed have experienced racism. A great many racial incidents occur on public transport or at bus stops. However very few racist incidents are reported. This is due to poor handling of complaints in the past and a general lack of confidence amongst the BME communities. Two distinct types of racism can be identified:

1. Direct racism – E.G. open discrimination by staff/ general public
2. Institutional racism – E.G. Lack of access to information in an appropriate language.

Recommendations for the next DLTP (2006-2011)

1. **Complaints procedure** – A suitable complaints procedure needs to be implemented.
2. **Awareness training**
3. **Access to information** – combat language barriers and more than one mode of information provided.
4. **Equal employment**
5. **Increased consultation** with ethnic groups.

Handouts

The following handout was circulated by Kevin McKenzie:-

‘Transport Needs of Black and Minority Ethnic Population’

Panel Discussion

- Racial awareness- there is a general lack of awareness to what constitutes a racist incident.
- Racial awareness training is required – combating stereotyping and racist attitudes.
- An environment with a zero tolerance policy to racism needs to be actively encouraged.