RACE, ETHNICITY AND EMPLOYMENT:
SUMMARY OF WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS

Introduction

This paper summarises the written evidence received by the Equal Opportunities Committee on its inquiry: Removing Barriers: race, ethnicity and employment.

There were 48 submissions\(^1\) received in response to the call for written views. Some that arrived after the closing date were not considered in this summary. However, all published submissions can be accessed via this link.

Information on the affiliation of those submitting views is presented at Annexe 1. Annexe 2 then lists the themes and questions that were in the call for written views.

Below is a brief summary of the key points raised in the responses to the call for views. This summary is not intended to replace reading the submissions themselves. It merely offers a flavour of the issues raised.

The responses are analysed under three broad themes: current support and services; areas for improvement; and barriers to promoting equality.

Current Support and Services

The call for views included questions about the support and services currently offered to assist people seeking to access employment. It also asked about measures in place to tackle segregation and discrimination. The information captured from these questions is the subject of this first section.

Current Services – public bodies

A number of public bodies highlighted the services and support that they offer, including funding offered to local voluntary sector organisations to assist in delivery of appropriate support. Local authorities and NHS Boards considered this issue in terms of what they did as employers. For example:

“The Council is taking a proactive, strategic approach to ensuring our employees have the necessary tools to undertake their duties and is about to

\(^1\) Some included supplementary information, which is listed on the website as a separate submission.
pilot the use of software called Read and Write Gold. This will provide employees with dyslexia and whose first language is not English with access to technology that makes reading, writing and research easier. It is discreet and provides all employees with access via a toolbar. Once piloted, the software will be rolled out to [the] Council IT network. We will promote the fact we use this software within our vacancy bulletins and recruitment portal to encourage applications from those people who would most benefit from it.” (North Lanarkshire Council)

“NSS works with the Council for Ethnic Minority Voluntary Organisations (CEMVO) and other third sector organisations to develop our approach to our employment opportunities for ethnic minority groups. NSS is drafting an Inclusion Plan for recruitment. This Plan aims to have all protected characteristics treated with equal importance in the recruitment process. The Plan proposes to ensure equality responsibility rests with all employees by way of their job description and will implement positive action strategies.” (NHS National Services Scotland)

There was also reference by local authorities to their role in supporting people in the local community to access appropriate employment opportunities (not specifically employment in the local authority):

“Given the demography of South Ayrshire, there has not been the need to date to deliver employability support and advice specifically to address lower employment rates for ethnic minorities. However, South Ayrshire Council supports unemployed people with barriers to employment to access training and learning opportunities to move into sustainable employment. All employability activity is delivered across the 5-stage employability skills pipeline… Where individuals are experiencing barriers to employment which are exacerbated by race, ethnicity or language barriers the action plan will reflect this and appropriate measures will be developed. For example, South Ayrshire Council’s Learning Shop in Ayr has delivered ESOL [English for Speakers of Other Languages] to service users in response to identified needs.” (South Ayrshire Council)

“Partnering with and providing funding to local organisations that specialise in services to the local international community so that we can co-ordinate recruitment skills sessions with BME [Black Minority Ethnic] citizens.” (Aberdeen City Council)

From the information provided by public bodies, it is clear that each is taking its own approach to providing support and services to ensure that ethnic minority groups can access employment either within the organisation itself or in the local area that the local authority operates in.
Some respondents highlighted their generic services as sufficient to meet the needs of all groups:

“Our employment support service is open to all of our diverse communities so access therefore is, not specifically aimed at ethnic minorities. In addition we work in partnership with Job Centre Plus and a range of third sector organisations to ensure all relevant members of our communities can gain access to employment support and advice.” (Scottish Borders Council)

The most common support highlighted was to address language issues. This was mentioned by a number of local authorities as the route to support ethnic minorities to access employment:

“The ESOL Work Club was launched in Stirling as part of the ASPIRE project for those who speak English as a second language and aims to support migrant workers looking for work. The programme supports English language development in a job search context, and focuses on CV writing, writing covering letters and interview techniques. The ESOL work club, as of December 2014, has supported 42 individuals, with 18 participants having successfully found employment.” (Stirling Council)

Several public bodies highlighted their involvement in the Modern Apprenticeship (MA) scheme, with many focusing on young people. One highlights its use of a targeted approach to link up specific groups of young people with local employment:

“North Ayrshire also delivers a Modern Apprenticeship programme for local businesses and this is positively targeted at youngsters who are disadvantaged from the labour market including ethnic minorities and disabilities. This programme supports businesses develop their workforces of the future.” (North Ayrshire Council)

While another conducts targeted recruitment campaigns that include opportunities to participate in the MA scheme on offer in the Council:

“The Council has specifically targeted recruitment campaigns through BME community newspapers and radio stations to try and recruit to key roles in care and social work. Seminars have been held with BME communities to promote the Council’s Modern Apprenticeship programme to encourage applications from school leavers.” (South Lanarkshire Council)

Innovative Services

In addition to the approach to support that was highlighted by public bodies, there were a number of examples – from both local authorities and voluntary sector organisations - of “innovative” services. The examples given were varied in focus and approach:
• Evening Employability Skills sessions facilitated by HR staff using local “organisations to liaise with the BME community to attract attendees. These sessions sought to provide training and guidance in how to compose a CV as well as candidate interview skills.” (Aberdeen City Council)

• Holistic Integration Service\(^2\) offers pre-employability and employability support. Each partner offers specific services based on their own areas of expertise. (Scottish Refugee Council)

• “REACH Community Health Project offers individuals from BME communities’ access to training, volunteering and employment opportunities through its “Employability and Health: Black and Minority Ethnic Skills Development Path Training Programme (BME SDPTP). Bridges Programmes is another organisation that offers employability support and client work placements to refugees, asylum seekers and migrants as well as to anyone for whom English is a second language living in Glasgow.” (West of Scotland Regional Equality Council)

The above examples illustrate measures to support ethnic minority groups. Many of the other examples of innovative services that were put forward were not specifically focused on ethnic minority groups, but on a wider set of issues e.g. disability, language support, gender and age related support (e.g. targeted at young people).

PATH (Scotland) is widely recognised as a long standing example of specialist support and services for people from different ethnic groups. PATH (Scotland) has worked with a number of registered social landlords, including recently with Govanhill Housing Association to highlight trainee opportunities for the Roma communities and with Queen’s Cross Housing to highlight opportunities to the Chinese communities.

_Monitoring Data_

A number of the responses highlighted the importance of monitoring data on ethnicity in employment, including monitoring of those who apply, who gain employment and also the progress of different groups of employees (to allow trends in recruitment, progression and retention to be captured).

Public authorities set out current practice in monitoring those who apply for posts. Equality monitoring allows public bodies to measure performance towards achieving equality goals – as established through the public sector equality duty of the Equality Act 2010\(^3\). Some of the public authorities cited this statutory requirement as driving this activity, with submissions recognising the importance of capturing monitoring data as part of staff recruitment. For example:

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\(^2\) The Holistic Integration Service is funded by BIG Lottery Scotland. It is a partnership led by Scottish Refugee Council with the Bridges Programmes, British Red Cross, Glasgow Clyde College and Workers Education Association (WEA) Scotland. Queen Margaret University is the Learning Partner

“In relation to recruitment, equal opportunity statistics are monitored on an annual basis…. [A] breakdown of the recruitment figures indicates that the number of people from ethnic minorities who successfully gained employment in the Council is proportionate to the population as a whole.” (North Lanarkshire Council)

One local authority made specific mention of its attempts to monitor all stages of employment. It noted the rationale for this as follows: “as part of our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 we gather and monitor our recruitment, retention and promotion data.” (Scottish Borders Council)

However, there was recognition that capturing robust monitoring data is not without its challenges. One local authority states:

“…although the council takes significant measures to gather equalities information, there is always an option not to disclose specific detail within the information requested. This is shown by the high percentage falling in the ‘unknown/no return’ category, which demonstrates [that] these figures may not be truly representative and could be closer or higher than in the community depending on the numbers concealed within this category.” (Aberdeenshire Council)

Several local authorities noted that local level Census data indicates that the ethnic minority population of the local area is relatively low. As such, low participation among ethnic minority groups in council employment is consistent with this population trend. While a number indicated that this suggests that there is no problem with the current recruitment practices, some did recognise that there is room for more to be done. For example:

“We are not complacent and monitor our workforce data regularly. We are currently undertaking a full workforce equality monitoring survey and will analyse and consider any findings and take appropriate action, including appropriate positive action.” (South Ayrshire Council)

In contrast, one individual respondent set out very clear criticism of the current practice in relation to monitoring of the ethnic minority workforce. The implication in this response is that local authorities could be doing more to improve monitoring data and using this to achieve better outcomes for the ethnic minority workforce:

“The myth that persists in Scotland is that there is no racism. I think that as long as there is little or no monitoring of numbers of people employed and numbers of people accessing services then we will continue to fail in making progress to address barriers and racism. As long as there are no consequences or accountability and no commitment to initiatives such as positive action the imbalances in society will persist.” (Individual)
CEMVO highlight the importance of gathering and analysing data on the ethnic minority workforce, not just to report on workforce patterns, but also to understand why patterns of inequality persist; while also capturing qualitative data on the experiences of the workforce.

Measures to Tackle Discrimination and Segregation

Of the submissions analysed, few made specific reference to measures in place to address segregation and discrimination in the workplace. For many local authorities the view was that there was no evidence of a problem with discrimination in the workforce that required attention:

“There is no evidence of workplace discrimination and segregation – any such issues would be addressed through the grievance and disciplinary process. A robust Prejudice Incident Reporting process is in place enabling members of the public and employees to report discriminatory behaviour to appropriate agencies.” (Aberdeenshire Council)

“There is no evidence to suggest that discrimination in recruitment, retention and promotion is an issue in Dumfries & Galloway Council. We strive to mainstream equalities in all that we do.” (Dumfries and Galloway Council)

Local authorities were of the view that formal grievance, disciplinary and dignity at work policies would serve to ensure that any incident that did occur would be dealt with transparently through formal policies. A small number talked about the efforts being made to ensure that segregation and discrimination do not occur, including training:

“To promote equality and eliminate discrimination we have undertaken a range of activities to date: … mainstreamed equality into all HR policies, which are equality impact-assessed; …put measures in place to assist managers with the recruitment and selection process to ensure best practice; …mainstreamed equality into our internal training courses, both online and classroom based. We continue to deliver bespoke equality training, including role specific equality training, such as a range of courses which were delivered to teaching staff; …developed advice and guidance on all protected characteristics to assist managers and employees in relation to their rights and responsibilities at work on the Council’s internal web pages; …encouraged wider participation in our Equality Champions Network to promote equality and assist in equality impact assessment; [and]… we monitor our workforce composition annually to further the equality duty.” (South Ayrshire Council)

There were also examples of the use of forums for employees, and champions for specific groups:

“The Council has traditionally had two employee forums: one for disabled employees and one for black and ethnic minority employees. The latter being
a joint forum with South Lanarkshire Council. This has recently been streamlined into one Employee Equality Forum. The Forum provides both disabled and ethnic minority employees with a platform to air any concerns they may have in relation to their employment and to be consulted on any changes to employment policy or practice…. The Council has an innovative Diversity Champions programme whereby employees volunteer to undergo an intensive three day training course. They then become active promoters of equality and diversity within their own workplaces. There are now over 50 Champions across five services, including employees working in depots and recycling centres (North Lanarkshire Council)

While these offer examples of measures taken, many of the submissions from those outside the public sector argue that there is room for significant improvement. A range of issues were suggested as requiring improvement to increase opportunities. These are considered in the next section.

**Areas for Improvement**

The current practice highlighted by respondents was largely framed around compliance with the public sector equality duty and using formal policies, such as the grievance policy or dignity at work policy, to offer mechanisms to protect individuals from incidents that may be identified as racist or discriminatory. There were, however, a number of the respondents from outside the public sector that cited a range of measures that could be further developed to improve outcomes for ethnic minority groups; involving steps that go further than training staff and putting formal policies in place.

Amina: the Muslim Women’s Resource Centre in its submission, for example, notes that quotas could be put in place to ensure that employers recruit ethnic minority workers, with the appropriate skills and abilities for the post, to ensure greater diversity in the workforce. An individual submission similarly suggested that efforts to ensure a diverse workforce representing a range of communities living in Scotland could go some way to “address some of the issues of discrimination and racism” (individual).

As well as training and awareness-raising for managers, and staff, Joseph Rowntree Foundation pointed to research evidence on the need to develop measures and increase transparency in access to opportunities for progress and promotion, with links to clear career paths.

Several submissions suggest that there could be much more use made of work placements or work trials in order to give people a chance to try out areas of work while gaining work experience. UNISON suggests that school work placements and “equality internships” for young people can provide opportunities for under-represented groups to try out new areas of work, so narrowing the ethnic segregation of the workforce.
This approach is seen as valuable for employers to learn more about diverse communities who may be able to offer necessary skills needed by the business. Alongside this, there were also suggestions that work shadowing, coaching and mentoring could be used to encourage ethnic minority employees to consider opportunities for progression and promotion.

West Dunbartonshire Council suggests that the focus in interview on using experience as the basis for judging ability – rather than being able to evidence competence to respond to the requirements of the role – may be impacting negatively on ethnic minority people, as well as disabled people and women. By implication, a move toward competency based approaches to selection of candidates would address this issue.

Returning to the subject of monitoring, it was noted that public bodies should be complying with the requirement to monitor and report on the equality characteristics of their workforce, and publishing this information so that others can scrutinise progress. Ensuring that a full range of information is collected and analysed was recognised as important; and if not being done, enforcement measures are needed to increase compliance.

*Two Ticks’ Scheme*

One of the issues raised in the call for views was whether something similar to the two ticks’ scheme available to disabled people⁴ should be made available to ethnic minority groups. The respondents were mixed in their response to this question. Some of the public bodies noted using the scheme for disabled people, but questions were raised as to why this scheme would be of benefit to ethnic minorities.

There was concern by some public bodies that introducing a scheme like the two ticks scheme for disabled people would result in additional bureaucracy with no clear advantages accompanying this. The view was that the current regulatory framework (public sector equality duty) is sufficient to achieve the changes that are needed.

PATH (Scotland) raises specific concerns about adopting a scheme of this type:

“We are concerned that a double tick scheme would have little or no impact on employers and while employers may use it to seek to show that they are a positive action employer, no real difference would be made. Legal solutions are not necessarily the strongest hand in promoting positive action.” (PATH (Scotland))

It was recognised that such schemes may not encourage individuals to apply for a job using the scheme, as there is a fear that using the mechanism will count against

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³ The two ticks’ scheme includes agreement that an employer when recruiting will interview every disabled applicant who meets the minimum criteria for a job vacancy, considering them principally on their ability to perform the role.
them rather than for them (South Lanarkshire Council). There are also people who may not wish to take advantage of such a scheme as they worry it will mean they are being shortlisted only because of their declaration rather than because the employer wished to shortlist them on the basis of the strength of their application.

There was also a view that a scheme like the guaranteed interview with the two ticks’ scheme for disabled people is unlikely to have much impact on ethnic minority groups as it is not the application stage that is problematic, but rather the shortlisting and selection stages. A two ticks’ scheme would not offer the appropriate mechanism to address the issues causing most difficulty (West Dunbartonshire Council).

**Positive Action Measures**

If positive action is understood as involving active steps being taken by employers to encourage people from specific groups (such as those that are currently underrepresented) to apply for jobs or promotion, the measures taken might include:

- Enabling or encouraging recruiters to overcome or minimise disadvantage
- Responding to the different needs of different applicants
- Enabling or encouraging participation in recruitment or promotion activity\(^5\).

Much of the activity of public authorities noted in the written submissions points to measures such as equality training and awareness-raising. These may go some way to assist recruiters to understand their practices and how to better engage with applicants. However, it is not clear at present how effective these awareness raising measures have been in changing practices. One local authority is optimistic that change is possible using the power within the Equality Act 2010:

“Inequality in employment is a persistent issue with limited examples of proven significant change. Past positive action measures applied in Scotland have been small in scale with no follow up evidence of sustainability or long term impact. …the Scottish Public Sector Equality Duty has given impetus, a legislative framework and a practical time frame to build on. This may be the set of conditions which deliver that long term sustainability and positive impact not seen to date.” (West Dunbartonshire Council)

The Scottish Refugee Council in its submission highlights awareness of a number of positive action schemes that have led to positive outcomes. It notes that these programmes are successful at providing training or recognition of prior qualifications to enable someone to continue on to the most appropriate qualification or to seek work in their field directly:

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“While these schemes are successful, they tend to target a professional niche and do not meet the needs of a wider population who may have limited language skills and lower levels of qualifications.” (Scottish Refugee Council)

CEMVO recognises that need for positive action measures “because some discrimination is so entrenched and as a result embedded in equality legislation”. However:

“We unfortunately are unable to provide any evidence of such options currently in place (for example using Section 159 of the Act [Equality Act 2010] which allows an employer in a tie-break situation to select the candidate from the group that faces disadvantage or is underrepresented)” (CEMVO)

Close the Gap similarly notes:

“Positive action measures are an effective way of addressing workplace inequalities. There is, however, a paucity of any successful examples to advance women or BME people’s equality in the labour market, and Close the Gap is not aware of any measures which specifically target BME women” (Close the Gap)

CEMVO concludes that what organisations pursue under the title of ‘positive action’ is “in our opinion” merely good practice, rather than active measures that directly tackle the longstanding cultural practices that exist within everyday workplaces.

In line with this recognised paucity of positive action measures, CRER points out that, in relation to race and employment, “very limited positive action measures are allowed” within current equality legislation.

**Barriers to Achieving Equality**

The majority of the respondents to this call for views referred to barriers that affect how different ethnic minority groups interact with the labour market. Issues were raised about barriers gaining access to the labour market, treatment within the labour market and outcomes from labour market participation.

**Intersections: Ethnicity, Gender and Religion**

Before looking in a little more detail at the range of barriers that were highlighted through submissions, it is worth noting that a number of submissions recognise that ethnicity interacts with other aspects of a person’s life to affect their experiences of the labour market. For example, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation points out:

“Ethnic minority women experienced multiple disadvantages in progressing, being affected by both ethnicity and gender (as has been shown in much previous research). This reflected in part the impact of caring responsibilities, particularly for children, and lack of affordable and appropriate childcare. It was compounded in many cases by caring for older or disabled people and
meant that some felt that they could not pursue their aspirations as there was little work available that they could combine with their caring responsibilities.”

(Joseph Rowntree Foundation)

Amina: the Muslim Women’s Resource Centre notes that Muslim women face a number of barriers to employment, including:

“…childcare issues, lack of support from partner to pursue work, language barriers, lack of confidence and lack of work experience. Most women felt that mainstream services were not meeting the needs of Muslim… women, and lacked real understanding of cultural issues affecting this group to progress to positive destinations.”

(Amina: the Muslim Women’s Resource Centre)

The issues facing Muslims living in Scotland were highlighted in several submissions. For example, the Scottish Police Federation cites a range of barriers that prevent young Muslims from entering the police service:

- Young Muslims need the support of their elders to pursue a specific career. However, some elders perceive a career as a police officer as ‘lower status’ than other professions.
- Muslim women may experience restrictions over who they can socialise with outside the family; and residential courses “raise obvious challenges”.
- As Islam requires the eldest son to remain in his parents’ home, pursuing a career in a specialist department or a promotion can mean being required to move to another part of Scotland, which would not be possible

(Scottish Police Federation).

The Refugee Women’s Strategy Group (RWSG) states that ethnic minority women face specific barriers to employment, different from those facing ethnic minority men. RWSG notes that, as a first generation ethnic minority group, refugee Muslim women can be at a particular disadvantage, facing multiple barriers to employment, including linguistic and cultural barriers, stigma and discrimination, physical and mental health issues resulting from experiences as asylum seekers, and a lack of support, including access to childcare.

Sikh Sanjog also highlights barriers that are the result of the interplay between gender and religion:

“Girls from the Sikh community may not get the same opportunity as their peers as they may not be allowed to go onto further education or employment. Many young people are not allowed to gain access to further education due to cultural restrictions. For some sections of this community only certain jobs are allowed to be accessed such as beauty and childcare, this is because many parents don’t want their girls mixing with men.”

(Sikh Sanjog)

What Explains Unequal Outcomes?
Two distinct perspectives were clear from the views presented. The first reflects barriers that focus largely on the individual. These are often referred to as ‘supply side’ issues as the focus is on working with individuals (the supply of labour) to ensure they have what is needed to better engage with the labour market. The second reflects barriers that focus more directly on society, the economy and employment practices. These are often referred to as ‘demand side’ factors (the demand by the economy for labour), where the focus is on changing attitudes and working practices to enable participation in the labour market.

The key difference between a supply or demand side focus is how the barrier is understood, so the solution needed to overcome it. For example, if the barriers are viewed as supply side (e.g. not having sufficient proficiency in English, a personal preference not to do certain types of work, family obligations or cultural pressure), then the solutions might be to offer language classes or support for the provision of suitable childcare.

In contrast, if the barriers are viewed as demand side (e.g. the result of the attitudes, prejudices and behaviours of wider society, employers and the culture of the workplace), the solutions may focus more on awareness raising, equality training, establishment and enforcement of effective policies e.g. dignity at work. A demand side focus may also involve taking active steps to recruit and retain a diverse workforce.

Supply Side Barriers

A range of supply side barriers were identified by respondents. For example, Aberdeen City Council suggests that education, culture, the influence of community peers or contemporaries and inadequate marketing of potential employment opportunities are important barriers.

South Lanarkshire Council suggests that attitudes to the public sector may be a barrier to people seeking work in local authorities:

“The professional careers within local government are not often recognised or valued as much as those within health or the private sector.” (South Lanarkshire Council)

Angus Council suggests that the main barrier to employment is not having sufficient proficiency in English. It also recognises that the transferability of qualifications could be another issue for some employers:

“It may be easier to employ someone with traditional qualifications than to wait for validation of those from overseas. This could also lead to some people accepting lower paid jobs than those they are qualified to do, for example, manual posts which need no particular qualification” (Angus Council)

Demand Side Barriers
A number of respondents were clear that the issues facing ethnic minority groups in Scotland are demand side, i.e. the result of unconscious bias, discrimination or institutional racism. As the Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights (CRER) states:

“There is ample evidence that people from Black minority ethnic backgrounds suffer disadvantage in the labour market. Whilst some of this may be due to capacity issues within some Black minority ethnic communities themselves… we would argue that much of this is down to structural discrimination in the labour market and to racial discrimination by employers.” (CRER)

Others also highlight demand side barriers:

“Discrimination, conscious/unconscious segregation, work biases and assumptions about a person's abilities are all factors that may contribute to [poorer] outcomes” (Active Life Club)

“It’s clear from the evidence that Amina has collated, that there are very real experiences of potential discrimination, largely attributed to the negative portrayal of Muslims in the media, and heightened anti-Muslim sentiment. Muslim or ME names and visible Muslim associated attire such as the hijab seem to allow for prejudice and lesser opportunity to have equal access to employment services, recruitment and progression.” (Amina: the Muslim Women's Resource Centre)

Respondents also drew attention to the negative cycle that can result from attempts to participate in the labour market:

“Unequal employment outcomes are... sometimes a result of negative attitudes in some bigger and long established organisations towards people from BME communities. Many of the clients we spoke to who were receiving mainstream support had a negative experience and did not feel supported, many times feeling very demoralised...This is a double sided barrier... it erodes the confidence of people looking for jobs and makes them feel hopeless. This can result in a lack of confidence when in an interview but can also lead to stress which may result in depression and therefore resulting in reduced job opportunities.” (Radiant and Brighter)

PATH (Scotland) also states that, in its 17 years' experience of running positive action training programmes for ethnic minority groups, it recognises the existence of direct and indirect discrimination in recruitment and selection (which is often difficult to prove), cultural bias at interview, stereotyping and isolation in the workplace.

Submissions also highlight recognition that cultural and workplace practices can reinforce segregation into specific occupations, sectors and roles, resulting in inequality of experience and outcomes from employment.

For example, Close the Gap refers to the “acute occupational segregation in Scotland’s Modern Apprenticeship programme” characterised by a concentration of
women into stereotypical employment roles’ (e.g. child care, health and social care and hairdressing). Occupational segregation can lead to poorer outcomes in terms of pay and promotion for many women. For women from ethnic minority groups, however, the issues are more complex and vary between groups and individuals; the result is that ethnic minority women can face a range of different labour market disadvantages (Close the Gap).

The culture of the workplace was mentioned by a number of respondents. Defining the culture of an organisation can, however, be difficult. CEMVO notes that employers may not realise how indirect discrimination occurs:

“Even where formal equal opportunities policies exist, our experience is that organisational culture can contribute to the exclusion of, and discrimination against, ethnic minority employees. During open and honest discussions with staff… issues such as unconscious bias can be acknowledged – wanting people to ‘fit in’, supporting the rights of clients over the rights of staff, using untrained (and unrepresentative) recruitment panels, job specifications which may deprive the employer of the most able candidate, lack of recognition of the ‘canteen culture’” (CEMVO).

In reality, people’s experiences of discrimination in the workplace are often subtle or intangible. As UNISON states: “We are aware from anecdotal evidence from our black members that they experience race discrimination in the workplace. Proving it is a complex, difficult and a stressful process” (UNISON).

Both CEMVO and CRER make it clear that supply side explanations for labour market inequality are insufficient. As CRER notes:

“…where action is supported, it tends to be focussed on supply side issues, as if the issue was that all Black minority ethnic people cannot speak English, are poorly skilled or lack educational qualifications. Undoubtedly these issues will be a factor for some people. But the issue of poor skills and qualifications are not race specific issues… for newer migrants there may be issues relating to a need for ESOL provision, recognition of their overseas qualifications or a lack of UK-based work experience, etc. but as the data shows, this affects only a minority of people from Black minority ethnic communities in Scotland. Rather, Scotland’s Black minority ethnic communities have a youthful and well-qualified potential workforce who all too often are unemployed or under-employed” (CRER)

This under-employment among settled ethnic minority communities (those that do not face barriers as a result of language or qualification transfer) means that some groups remain “clustered in specific fields such as retail or self-employment” (UNISON). UNISON and CEMVO point out that this clustering of settled ethnic minority groups into specific occupations / sectors is not simply a matter of choice but is a result of discrimination/racism towards certain groups.
Both CEMVO and CRER argue that there needs to be a clear focus for this inquiry on “institutional discrimination” as the explanation for unequal labour market outcomes. CEMVO states, for example:

“Without focused research, we cannot know if there is a single cause for the current pattern of labour market disadvantage. However, if we agree to move from the deficit model which identifies the problems as being to do with the individual – fluency in English/language difficulties, closed communities, cultural and family patterns, self-de-selection, etc. (any of which only apply to a small percentage of ethnic minority people living in Scotland) the logical path take us to some form of institutional discrimination” (CEMVO)

While CRER proposes that supply side and demand side issues should be dealt with separately, although it recognises that: “dealing with institutional racial discrimination in the labour market will not be an easy topic to take on, but unless we begin to do so then the current situation will remain unchanged” (CRER).
ANNEXE 1 – AFFILIATION OF THOSE WHO SUBMITTED EVIDENCE TO THE CALL FOR WRITTEN VIEWS

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ANNEXE 2: THEMES AND QUESTIONS IN THE CALL FOR VIEWS

Employment Support and Advice

- What provisions are in place to help people from ethnic minority groups to access employment support and advice?
- What provisions are in place to recognise and address the lower employment rates among some ethnic minority groups compared to others?
- Are there any innovative approaches being taken to address the challenges some people from ethnic minority groups may experience in trying to access employment advice and support?

Recruitment, Retention and Promotion

- What evidence is there that discrimination in recruitment, retention and promotion is an issue in Scottish workplaces?
- What are the barriers that lead to unequal outcomes (including lower rates of employment and employment segregation)?

Promoting Equality / Positive Action

- What measures are being taken to tackle workplace discrimination and segregation?
- Is there a need for a scheme that recognises positive action taken by employers’ (a “double tick” scheme for example)?
- Are there any examples of good practice that have improved outcomes? If so, what has been the key to their success?