1. Employment Support and Advice

a. What Provisions are in place to help people from ethnic minorities to access employment support and advice?

There are only a handful of organisations which includes WSREC that have employment and training projects that they are currently running targeting individuals from ethnic minority communities in Scotland with WSREC having a large project.

It is mix of very small pieces of work targeting specific communities whereas others are open to all ethnic minorities; most are restricted to a certain geographical area. These organisations may also offer one to one support to enable individuals to meet with an Employment Advisor to discuss the steps that they need to take in relation to getting a job.

Training is also on offer from some of these organisations in order to equip individuals with new skills. The most common training courses offered involve help and advice to create a CV, to learn how to navigate online when searching for jobs and to build self-confidence.

Some organisations also offer English as a second language (ESOL) classes to support individuals to increase their levels of English proficiency as this is a key requirement that will aid the individual with respect to obtaining employment. 

There is very limited employment advice of a legal nature i.e. Ethnic Minority Law Centre.

b. What provisions are in place to recognise and address the lower employment rates among some ethnic minority groups compared to others?

At WSREC we have identified a higher level of unemployment in certain ethnic minority groups when compared to other groups. The causes of this high level of unemployment are varied and differ from community to community. There are however, common historical themes across minority ethnic communities that include discrimination in accessing employment and level of English proficiency which are causes of unemployment and are still very much in existence.

In the case of the Roma community these themes are central to unemployment within the community alongside low educational attainment which essentially traps people in a cycle of poverty fuelled by unemployment.
In the refugee community the levels of education are often higher and people are faced with struggling to find employment which matches their skills and have to adapt their skills to working in Scotland.

For Asylum Seekers who are unable to undertake paid work it is vital that ahead of a decision on their status they are job ready and understand what they need to do to enhance their chances of obtaining employment.

For people with disabilities from minority ethnic communities the barriers are on a par with others with disabilities and are also enhanced by racial discrimination, lack of awareness of support especially if the person has not accessed support before and in some cases the level of education which has been attained.

Our understanding of these issues has been gained through experience of working with these communities and others through a variety of projects in recent years. From 2011-13 WSREC ran our New Moves project which supported minority ethnic individuals into volunteering positions. A high proportion of users were from a refugee or asylum seeker background and their reasons for volunteering included getting experience of work in Scotland to increase their chances of getting a job. In a lot of cases, it is common for refugees and asylum seekers in their 20’s onwards to have a good level of education but plan for employment in service level jobs as they feel that they would not be able to retrain in Scotland in their specialised fields.

WSREC’s understanding of the Roma community comes from over 6 years of running projects with the Roma community. As a result, we know that issues of limited education, poverty and prejudice are instrumental in stopping Roma people accessing employment or planning a career path.

The issue of unemployment among minority ethnic individuals with a disability is one which has been seldom addressed and our understanding has been gained from connections we have from people who are disabled themselves and understand the barriers they face. WSREC has also been working in partnership with REMPLOY to conduct research into barriers experienced by Glasgow’s minority ethnic disabled population to enable the services provided by the project to meet the needs of the people from this background.

At WSREC, there is a 3 year funded employment project called Minority Ethnic Employment and Training Support (MEETS). This project is open to anyone who identifies themselves as being from a minority ethnic background, however, particular focus is put on supporting those from the Roma communities, Asylum seeker and refugee communities and also to those who are from a minority ethnic background and have a disability.

c. Are there any innovative approaches being taken to address the challenges some people from ethnic minorities may experience in trying to access employment advice and support?
- **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.

- More recently **Skills Development Scotland** in partnership with BEMIS Scotland are making an attempt in helping people from ethnic minority communities to find training and employment opportunities. They will provide workshops for training opportunities and also support individuals to access modern apprenticeship information.

- **WSREC’s MEETS** project is using innovation at the focal point of its approach in supporting people from minority ethnic communities to access employment advice and support. The project is supporting the harder to reach minority ethnic communities to fill in the gaps in services that are pertinent within their communities.

  The approach of the MEETS staff team is culturally sensitive and there are plans to ensure that training is offered in a localised manner for the community that requires it.

  Based on individual community engagement, the workshops designed will be tailored to the needs of the community group to which it is being delivered to. This will be achieved by engaging with the communities that require this provision and establishing their needs first. Support staff with language skills will be available in order that all parties communicate effectively with the communities that they will be engaging with. In addition they will be looking to recruit volunteers from within the target communities as “community champions”, to ensure that the profile of the project is raised within that community and that individuals from within the community feel comfortable in accessing the services provided.

  The project offers intensive one to one support with an Employment Advisor to support clients to look into opportunities that are available for them. In addition, there will be workplace tours arranged so interested clients can meet with employers and can get a taste of what working for them might be like. Also organise jobs fairs to allow employers to be able to advertise their vacancies to the client base and also to allow clients to ask any questions that they may have to employers in an environment that the clients feel comfortable in.

  **It has to be noted that these are Glasgow based projects**
2. Recruitment, Retention and Promotion

a. What evidence is there that discrimination in recruitment, retention and promotion is an issue in Scottish workplaces?

One of the reasons for the figures below in terms of recruitment will be discrimination. Various pieces of research have concluded this and most recent research reports Muslims were the most disadvantaged in terms of employment prospects out of 14 ethno-religious groupings in the UK, researchers Dr Nabil Khattab and Professor Ron Johnston found using data from the Office for National Statistics’ Labour Force Survey.

- POLICE SCOTLAND
  The numbers of individuals recruited from a minority ethnic background does not reflect the social composition of society in Scotland at large. Just over 1% police staff representing 4% of Scotland’s population (APPENDIX 1)

- ARMED FORCES
  The numbers of officers recruited from a minority ethnic background does not reflect the social composition of society at large. (APPENDIX1)

- GLASGOW CITY COUNCIL
  Glasgow City Council’s BME workforce is 1.9% of the total, despite the BME population of the city amounting to 11.6% - CRER “The State of the Nation: Race & Racism in Scotland – Employment” (2nd Edition 2014, vol 3)

- DEPARTMENT OF WORK AND PENSIONS
  Department of Work and Pensions research (which included employers in Scotland) showed a person with a ‘BME sounding name’ had to send an application away 16 times to achieve a successful response compared to the 9 times for someone with a ‘white sounding name’ - even though they were submitting the same application - Department for Work and Pensions, “A test for racial discrimination in recruitment practice in British cities” (Research Report No 607).

b. What are the barriers that lead to unequal outcomes (including lower rates of employment and employment segregation)?

- Discrimination – this is a key barrier faced by minority ethnic people when they are trying to progress in the labour market and in many of cases results in individuals remaining underemployed in jobs that do not reflect their qualifications
- Gender – Women from minority ethnic communities can sometimes face additional barriers due to the fact that they are female AND from a minority ethnic group.
- Status – There is difficulty in matching qualifications to UK equivalents for some individuals. Also there is the issue of some employers not being aware or understanding enough of immigration status.
- The way in which people go about applying for a job in Scotland may not be the same as the process in other countries. In situations like this, migrants, refugees and asylum seekers need to be supported to understand the labour market better.
- Candidates for a job rejected at the first stage of application for having a foreign name or coming from a non-white background
- Low levels of self-confidence can be a major factor in relation to individuals from a minority ethnic background struggling to get into employment.
- One of the key factors which are a significant barrier is lack of English proficiency.
- Ethnic minorities tend to be clustered in certain geographical areas. More often than not, these areas tend to be those with a high level of deprivation and a lack of suitable employment opportunities.
- Ethnic stereotypes and prejudices on the part of the employers
- Competency frameworks in the job interview process penalising those who do not have English as their first language.
- Members from minority ethnic communities not applying for certain jobs due to their awareness of the potential for discrimination in a specific sector thereby constraining their own job-seeking.
- Lack of linguistic and culturally sensitive support

3. **Promoting Positive Action**

a. **What measures are being taken to tackle workplace discrimination and segregation?**

- The Equalities Act 2010 has protected people in the workplace from being treated less favourably because they have a protected characteristic. These relative protected characteristics in employment are:
  - The use of standardised job application forms rather than CV’s allows a greater flexibility within competency frameworks to allow foreign work experience to be taken into account more.
  - Tailored guidance and support for small and medium sized enterprises to allow them to implement fairer workplace practices.

b. **Is there a need for a scheme that recognises positive action taken by employers (a “double tick” scheme for example)?**

The simple answer is **YES**

A scheme for employers (such as a “double tick” scheme) can be of benefit as it gives an incentive for prospective employers to get involved in the promotion of positive action within their organisations and also shows recognition of the steps that they have taken to make their workplace a fairer one.
Also it would be useful to promote the standard ‘Investors in Diversity’ by National Centre for Diversity

c. What are the examples of good practice that have improved outcomes, and if so what has been the key to their success?

Apart from the small projects mentioned above we have not found any examples of good practice in Glasgow or Scotland for that matter.

We have no knowledge of Positive Action (Equality Act 2010) in recruitment and promotion utilised which allows an employer when faced with making a choice between 2 or more candidates who are of equal merit, to take into consideration whether one is from a group that is disproportionately under-represented or otherwise disadvantaged within the workforce. This kind of positive action is legal when it is used as a proportionate way of addressing the under-representation or disadvantage.

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