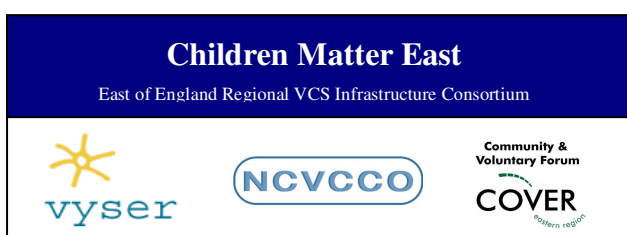


Eastern Region Voluntary & Community Sector Black and Minority Ethnic Research Final Report April 2008

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For Children Matter East and the VCS Engage programme



CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENT	2
CONTEXT	2
INTRODUCTION	4
METHODOLOGY	4
RESULTS & DISCUSSION.....	5
OTHER RESPONSES	7
CASE STUDIES:	
• MAKING TRACKS, IPSWICH.....	8
• BEDFORD AFRICAN CARIBBEAN FORUM.....	9
• THURROCK RACIAL UNITY SUPPORT TASK GROUP	10
• YMCA PETERBOROUGH.....	11
SUMMARY, CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS	12
APPENDIX	13

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We would like to thank the numerous voluntary organisations working with black, asian and minority ethnic children and young people who so freely gave of their time and experience in order to make this research possible. The contribution of those organisations who responded to the survey, and those who provided case studies, has been of the utmost value and is much appreciated. A full list of the organisations contacted is included in the appendix.

This report was commissioned by Children Matter East and the VCS Engage Programme. In case of enquiry please contact Kevin Garrod, VCS Engage Regional Development Manager, email kevingarrod@ntlworld.com, telephone 01473 437528 / 07799 262849.

CONTEXT

Since Every Child Matters in 2003 and the subsequent Children Act of 2004, Local Authorities have developed distinct arrangements and responsibilities for managing the design, procurement and delivery of services for those aged 0-19.

This presents the Children and Young People's Voluntary and Community Sector with significant challenges and opportunities.

"The formal duty to cooperate extends only to the local authority's strategic 'relevant partners' and not to these 'other bodies', but this does not mean they should be excluded from strategic decision making and governance arrangements. Crucially, voluntary and community sector organisations and private sector bodies should be closely engaged".

"Many third sector organisations do have the capacity to engage, but others for a variety of reasons may struggle. The local authority needs to assess the situation and act proactively, through the Voluntary Sector Forum for example, to engage smaller organisations in the governance of the Children's Trust". statutory guidance (proposed revisions) on Children's Trusts, DCSF, 2008

Since 2006 there has been an informal regional alliance across this sector which has, alongside its associated forums, networks and umbrella organisations, begun to represent the specialist interests of the sector.

The VCS Engage programme is sponsored by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) to support the voluntary and community sector's ability to engage with Children's Trusts and to increase its capacity to deliver services.

The VCS Engage programme in the region has been very closely associated with the development of a regional forum for the Children and Young People's Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) in the East of England, **whose vision is that:**

“With a registered charity for every 150 children or young people the Children and Young People's VCS makes a significant contribution to the well being of the East of England. The sector wishes to ensure that it is able to continue providing the best possible outcomes for children and young people by maximising its ability to represent itself nationally, regionally and locally”.

Its aim is to:

Provide a cohesive arena in which members can develop influence with national, regional and local partners and to help coordinate resources to support the development of Children & Young People's VCS in the East of England.

To support the development of:

- Sustainable and integrated voluntary and community led services for children, young people, their families and their communities.
- Better arrangements for Children's Trusts and their regional partners to engage the Children and Young People's VCS, and their (Trusts') ability to support the sector to deliver integrated outcomes.
- Investment that prevents the Children and Young People's VCS from being excluded from strategic (and locality) decision making and governance arrangements.

One of the programme's priorities is to develop support for the Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) VCS that works with Children and Young People to become engaged with Children's Trusts. Existing national research suggests that the BME sector working with Children and Young People has experienced many of the same barriers that mainstream VCS organisations have identified.

The aim of national BME research has been to identify models of best practice and to ensure that local authorities and other agencies have an understanding of and give priority to the needs of BME children and their families. The intention is to reframe current practice to give proper consideration to the needs of BME children and their families and to focus on their strengths, aspirations and ambitions. It is important that services are appropriate, accessible and culturally sensitive.

The specific aim of the Eastern region research, which was commissioned separately, is to establish a baseline position which could identify further investment and activity set and prioritised against need.

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this research was to undertake a mapping exercise of:

- a) VCS organisations targeting BME groups (NCVCCO list)
- b) BME organisations working with Children & Young People (CYP) and to case study at least one of each of the above.

The scope of the research was the 10 Local Authority areas within the Eastern region: Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Norfolk, Suffolk, Luton, Peterborough, Thurrock, Southend.

METHODOLOGY

The research took place between January and March 2008. Timescales to complete were tight but nonetheless compact compliant, and included:

- 31 CVS offices contacted for details of organisations in their network.
- A short online survey was designed to give an indication of the type of service and the age range and ethnic groups of children and young people for whom it is provided.
- 75 VCS organisations (local and regional) working with BME children and young people were sent the online survey (27 Infrastructure/53 BME).
- Contacted MENTER (East of England Black and Minority Ethnic Network) who sent the online survey to 1500 members of their network.
- Personal interviews were conducted with 4 organisations (two BME organisations, one infrastructure targeting BME CYP and one working with a range of CYP). These covered the issues for providers, their engagement with existing networks, funding, and commissioning.

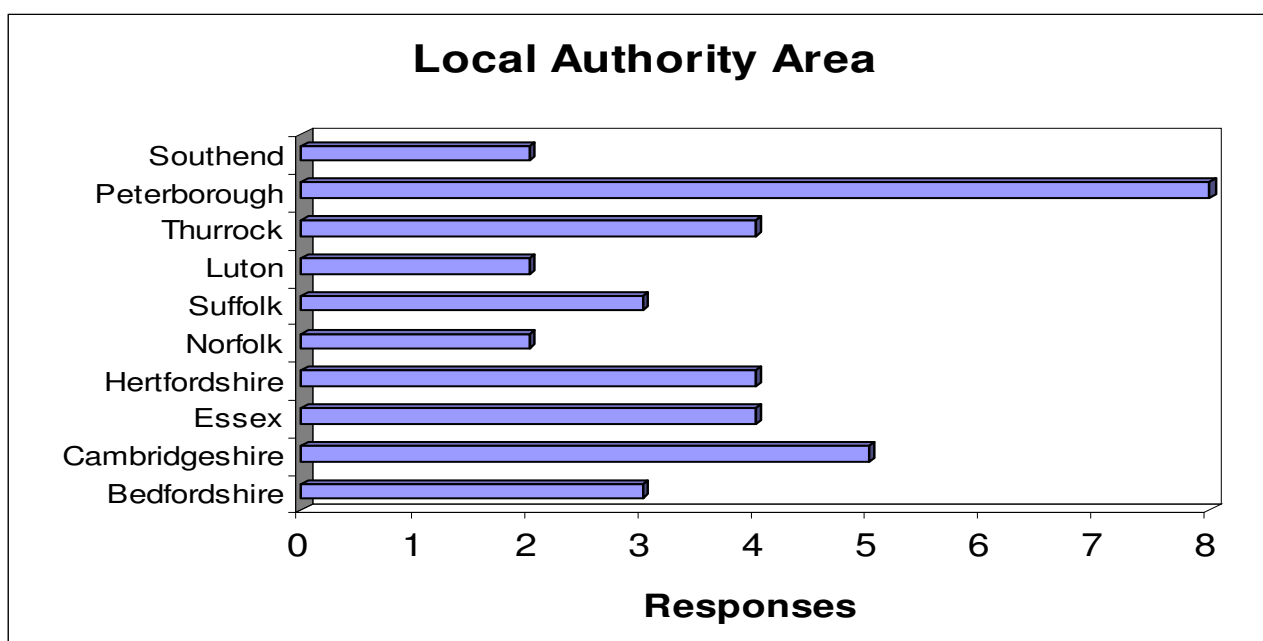
RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Survey responses:

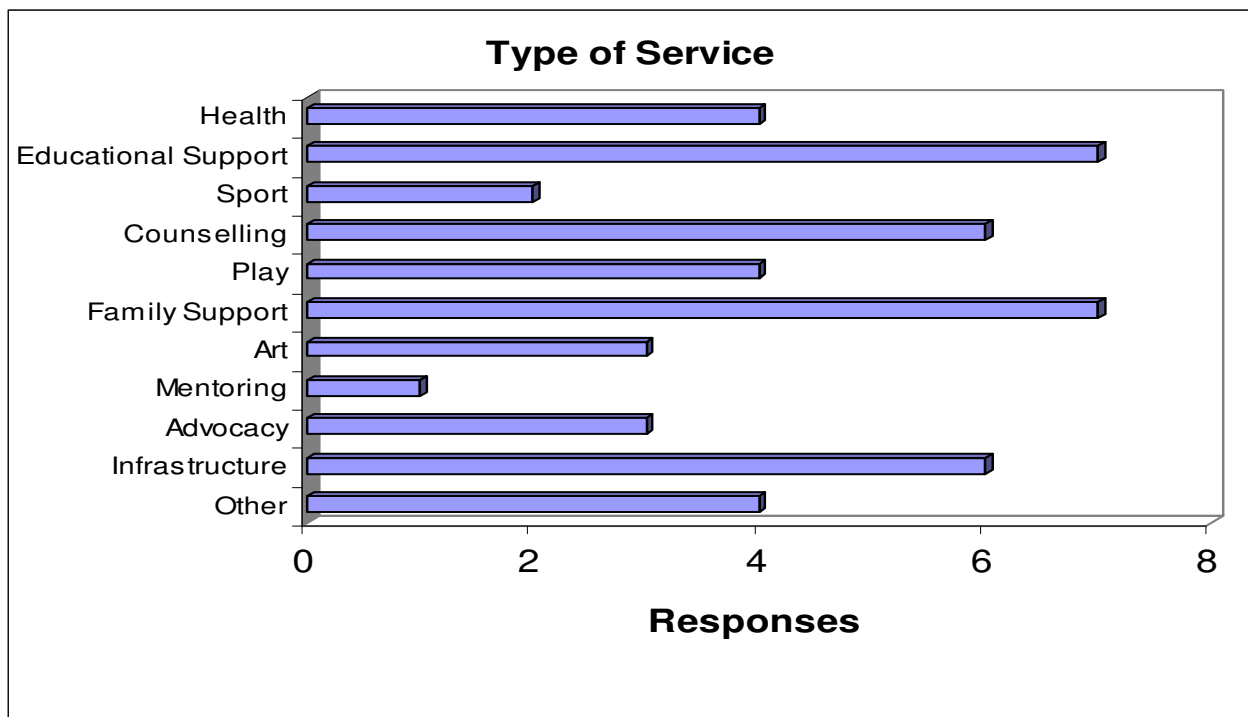
21 replies received to the online survey from the following organisations:

Voluntary Action Luton
Young Lives Cambridgeshire, Peterborough
Young Lives Peterborough, Cambridgeshire BME
Young Lives Cambridgeshire
Thurrock Racial Unity Support Task group
Community Action Dacorum
Bedford African and Caribbean Forum
Essex Council for Voluntary Youth Services
South Essex Rape and Incest Crisis Centre
Ormiston Children and Families Trust
Voluntary Sector Forum
Making Tracks
YMCA-Youth Inclusion Programme
Bharat Sena
African Caribbean Forum
Barnardos
OPF Gingerbread
North Hertfordshire Minority Ethnic Forum
Ipswich Libraries
Family Groups, Bedford
Clacton Family Centre Diversity Project

Responses were received from all 10 Local Authority areas as shown:



The range of services provided was as follows:



All organisations reported that they work with black and minority ethnic groups but only 6 that their service was specifically targeted towards a particular ethnic group. The specific ethnic groups targeted were African/Caribbean, Indian, Pakistani, Gypsy & Traveller.

The BME groups that organisations are working with included: African, Caribbean, Dual heritage, Pakistani, Indian, Nepalese, Gypsy & Traveller, Iranian, Albanian, Eastern European, Irish, Spanish/Israeli, Chinese, and Turkish.

1. There was a higher level of work in advocacy than expected.
2. 14 out of 19 organisations reported that they are part of a voluntary organisations network.
3. Age range worked with:
 - Full range 0-19 years: 6 organisations
 - 12 years and over: 6 organisations
 - Mid range school age: 3 organisations (4-16yrs, 8-14 yrs, 5-13 yrs)
 - 16 years and over: 1 organisation
 - 0-13 years: 1 organisation
 - 0-5 years: 1 organisation

OTHER RESPONSES

The Council for Voluntary Services Uttlesford reported that they have no details of BME groups working with young people in this area and that this reflects the BME statistic for Uttlesford which is 0.8% of the population.

Braintree District Voluntary Support Agency reported that they have only 2 BME organisations on their database.

Hertsmere Council for Voluntary Services reported that there are no voluntary organisations working with BME children and young people in their area.

“There is a County-wide BME project but they have no involvement in this area and I don’t think they are doing anything for children or young people. Effectively there is little or no infrastructure support (BME or otherwise) for organisations working with specific groups of people within the County. They fall in with generalist agencies, such as ours, with very limited resources”.

Fenland Council for Voluntary Services reported that:

“Whilst there are plenty of organisations in the area working with children and young people there are few if any that they would describe as BME organisations. Equally there is significant work being undertaken around BME issues but this work is focussed on individuals and families rather than organisations. At present this work has highlighted very few BME organisations at all”.

CASE STUDIES:

Making Tracks, Ipswich

Background and services provided:

Making Tracks is a charity managed by Ipswich Council for Voluntary Services (CVS) which runs 4 drop-in centres for children and young people aged 8-14 years. The organisation has a strong commitment to multi-agency working and there is great networking with the local councils and other statutory and voluntary agencies.

The centres are located in areas of Ipswich which are disadvantaged through low income and high crime rates. They provide a signposting service to other agencies and seek to involve the young people in the local community.

The service is open access and referrals are also made on an informal basis from other organisations. The service is user led and the young people are regularly asked for their comments and suggestions on what is provided.

The centres are used by children and young people from a broad range of ethnic backgrounds and are not targeted at any particular ethnic groups. However ethnicity is recorded on the membership form and the users are approximately 60-70% white British and 20-30% from mixed and other racial backgrounds.

Issues raised:

- Funding is the main concern

Involvement with existing networks:

- Projects are undertaken as requested by Ipswich Borough Council whose partnership is very important to the organisation.
- Representation on community based steering groups involving statutory and voluntary agencies organised by Suffolk Constabulary, Suffolk County and Ipswich Borough Councils.
- The Making Tracks Project manager is based at Ipswich CVS
- The organisation has no involvement in Children's Trust commissioning.

Bedford African and Caribbean Forum

Background and vision:

Bedford African and Caribbean Forum is a voluntary organisation founded in 1998 in response to the needs of young people in Bedford. The work of the forum covers mentoring and counselling of African/Caribbean and mixed heritage young people especially those with mental health issues. Their services provide for both open access and referrals.

Issues raised:

- Difficulty in accessing money for long term support
- Need for a venue/facility with recording equipment to engage young people in music and drama.
- Lack of feedback from conferences and council meetings to do with young people.
- Tokenism - statutory sector bodies often work with 1 voluntary organisation to fulfil government requirements.
- Most counselling provided for young people is from a Euro-centric perspective and therefore cannot be easily accessed by African/Caribbean young people.
- Young people need mentors who will give them time, listen to them and become advocates on their behalf.
- *“BME is a buzz word for organisations to get money but the money coming to grass roots never happens in a sustainable way”*

Involvement with existing networks:

BACF is represented at VOC, Patient Involvement Forum, Criminal Justice Board and is currently Vice-Chair of the Diversity Forum. BACF also acts as an umbrella organisation for a number of other African/Caribbean groups such as the Beulah Project and Saturday School. Many African/Caribbean, Afghans and Asians find it very difficult to engage, especially in statutory sector forums, due to lack of trust in the system. BACF encourages African/Caribbean people to be more responsible in engaging with networks and becoming advocates for their communities. BACF has had no involvement in Children's Trust commissioning.

TRUST (Thurrock Racial Unity Support Task group)

Background and services provided:

TRUST is the BME and faith communities' infrastructure organisation covering the area governed by Thurrock Council (Unitary Authority). Their work involves supporting young people and families through counselling, advocacy, and community development and raising awareness of ethnic, cultural and faith issues especially among those providing frontline community services.

Thurrock has experienced rapid demographic change in the last 2 years with an increasing number of African (including 1st and 2nd generation British) and East European immigrants settling in the area. The local Asian community is well established having settled in the area during the 1960s and there is an indigenous white population with a high level of unemployment. The recent immigrant population also includes many middle class professionals who favour the area due to its proximity to London.

Issues raised:

- There is a perception that voluntary and faith organisations are not treated as equal partners by the statutory sector and the partnerships are often tokenistic.
- The Local Authority does not acknowledge as professionals those who work in the voluntary sector.
- Senior officers within the statutory agencies are well aware of BME and faith issues but those working at the grass roots in frontline services, such as receptionists and housing officers are often not aware of cultural differences and the need for sensitivity to these differences.
- Funding from Thurrock Council covers management, administration and finance costs but funding for specific project work has to be sought externally. External grants are often difficult for TRUST to appropriate as the funders are usually looking for regional providers.

Involvement with existing networks:

TRUST works closely with statutory agencies such as the Primary Care Trust (PCT) and Children's Trust (CT) and is core funded by Thurrock Council. Project funding has come from the PCT and Lloyds TSB.

TRUST is part of the BME Lit group, a network of mental health community workers in Essex, funded by the PCT and has a place on the Community Involvement Board, part of the Thurrock Local Strategic Partnership. TRUST set up and runs the Tilbury Black and Ethnic Minority Forum and the local Hate Crime Officer works in partnership with TRUST. TRUST has a place on the board of the Children's Trust in order to ensure that BME and faith issues are kept on the agenda. Thurrock Children's Trust is not yet at the commissioning stage, though work is continuing through organisations with existing Service Level Agreements (SLA).

YMCA Peterborough Youth Inclusion Project

Background and vision:

The project is based at the Gladstone Park centre to the north of Peterborough city centre. The local residents in the geographical area covered by the centre have been predominantly Pakistani for several decades. Since 2005 significant numbers of East European immigrants have settled in the area, especially Polish, Czech and Lithuanian, following the expansion of the European Union. This has led to an increase in racial tensions in the area.

The YMCA has been running the Youth Inclusion Project (YIP) in this area for the past 8 years funded by the Youth Justice Board. The project involves mentoring young people aged 13-17, mainly from the Pakistani community, though some are now East European immigrants, through the secondary schools which they attend. It is an open access service though young people are also referred to the service.

Issues raised:

- Funding for the Youth Club came to an end in December 2007 and the project manager is currently looking for funding to extend this provision.
- It is difficult to integrate the Pakistani and East European young people as their behaviour tends to be aggressive and especially so towards those not from their own group.
- There is a rapid rise of sexual health issues, teenage pregnancies and abortion rates, use of drugs and alcohol among Pakistani girls.
- There is no funding available for female sessional workers.
- Radical extremist Islamic views are coming to the fore especially among Pakistani boys. This has been largely ignored by the police to date as there is no imminent danger.
- There is no exit strategy for young people who have made progress through the YIP project.

Involvement with existing networks:

The project is represented on the Gladstone Connect local forum which includes both voluntary and statutory sector organisations. The partnership with 4 secondary schools attended by young people from the Gladstone area is strong and works very well.

The work of YIP is overseen by the Peterborough Youth Offending Team (YOT) as part of their programme of prevention. Some training for mentors is provided by YOT and YIP also use youth work training delivered by Young Lives. The YMCA Peterborough Cresset centre is involved in work for the Children's Trust including a transition project for those moving from primary to secondary school and the Youth Inclusion Support Panel (YISP).

SUMMARY

The response rate was higher than expected for the sector, many of the respondents identified their contribution to community cohesion and therefore improving outcomes for Children and Young People. Much of the work delivered by the sector has an informal nature but not informal outcomes. The more open access universal activities provided on a largely voluntary basis are hidden from the wider thinking around Children's services.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The East of England is quite unique, with large variations between levels of ethnicity across the region.
2. There were very few VCS organisations with BME origins delivering services for children and young people which were not universal.
3. Almost all VCS providers responding were clearly working with BME communities and their children , young people and families
4. Where services are commissioned as specific intervention projects to support BME communities, those holding the contracts tended to be mainstream providers using their skills and ethos to deliver an appropriate and thoughtful service.
5. Some areas did not have any BME activity or support systems in place from the VCS.
6. Funding and fairness remained constant themes for BME organisations.
7. The report confirms anecdotal evidence gathered since 2006.
8. The interaction with the relevant Children's Trusts appeared to be missing in two of the case studies; the comments were of more concern, given that one of the projects reporting this has been largely funded via the Children's Fund.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- There needs to be further refinement and articulation of what is understood by the BME VCS which works with children and young people.
- Work needs to take place initially on intensive pilot-based schematics. These should address the following issues facing BME children and young people's projects, activities and services:
 1. their ongoing inability to secure funding
 2. their interaction with Children's Trusts around commissioning
 3. their ability to contribute to and change the "needs analysis" of Children's Trusts
- The evidence and intelligence available from mainstream VCS providers needs to be considered in the planning of higher tiered services for BME communities.

APPENDIX

Eastern region VCS Organisations working with BME Children and Young People

Name of organisation	Local Authority Area	BME/Infra
ADIBOP (Asian Drugs Information Befriending & Outreach Project)	Luton	BME
Afro-Caribbean Association	St Albans, Herts	BME
Afro-Caribbean Saturday School	Ipswich, Suffolk	BME
Alabaster Enterprises	Leighton Buzzard, Beds	BME
Al-Falah Braintree Islamic Centre.	Essex	BME
Asian Girl's and Women's group	St Albans, Herts	BME
ASPECT (Supplementary school project)	Herts	BME
Bangladeshi Muslim Youth Forum	Suffolk	BME
Bedford Race Equality Council	Beds	I
Bedfordshire African & Caribbean Forum	Beds	BME
Bedfordshire African Support Project	Luton/Beds	BME
Bedfordshire Chinese Association	Luton/Beds	BME
Beds African Community Centre	Luton/Beds	BME
Benjamin Foundation	Norfolk	BME
Bharat Hindu Samaj Youth	Peterborough	BME
Bosnia & Herzegovina Community Association	Luton	BME
Braintree District Council (Community Development Coord)	Essex	I
Brentwood Extended Schools Coordinator	Essex	I
Cambridge Ethnic Community Forum	Cambs	BME
Caribbean Centre	Peterborough	BME
Centre for African Positive Health	Luton	BME
Colchester and Tendring Black and Minority Ethnic Partnership	Essex	BME
Colchester Bangladeshi Mohila Somity	Essex	BME
Community Action Dacorum	Herts	I
Dallow Learning and Community Centre	Luton	BME
East Anglian Indian Association	Suffolk	BME
ECVYS (Essex Council for Voluntary Youth Services)	Essex, Thurrock, Southend	I
Essex Race Equality Council	Essex	I
Ethnic Voice	Essex	BME
Family Care	Peterborough	I
Family Groups	Bedford	BME
Family Welfare Association	Peterborough	I
Four Winds Social Club	Luton	BME
Gingerbread	Stevenage	BME
Gladstone Children's Centre	Peterborough	BME
Gypsy/Traveller Project	Peterborough	BME
GYROS Childcare & Family Support (Refugee/asylum seekers)	Norfolk	I

Herts BME Partnership	Herts	I
Herts County Council BME Representative	Herts	I
Hindu Dharma Society	Essex	BME
Indian Cultural Society	St Albans, Herts	BME
Ipswich and Suffolk Council for Racial Equality	Suffolk	I
Ipswich Caribbean Association	Suffolk	BME
Ipswich Family Support Services	Suffolk (Children's Fund)	BME
Islamic Centre	St Albans, Herts	BME
Luton & Beds Youth Assoc	Beds	I
Luton Assembly	Luton	I
Luton Irish Community Forum	Luton	BME
Luton Young Leaders Academy	Luton	BME
Making Tracks	Suffolk (Children's Fund)	BME
MENTER (East of England Black and Minority Ethnic Network)	Eastern region	I
North Herts Minority Ethnic Forum	Herts	BME
Norwich and Norfolk Race Equality Council	Norfolk	I
Ormiston Trust Travellers' project	Cambs, Peterboro', Norfolk	BME
Parentlineplus	Beds	I
Peterborough African Refugees Community Association	Peterborough	BME
Peterborough Race Equality Council	Peterborough	I
Punjabi 4 You	Peterborough	BME
Redeemed Christian Church of God	Herts	BME
Sangam	Peterborough	BME
South Essex Rape and Incest Crisis Centre	Essex, Thurrock	
Starlight Youth Centre	Luton	BME
Stevenage World Forum for Ethnic Communities	Herts	BME
Suffolk Association Voluntary Organisation	Suffolk	I
Suffolk Young Carers	Suffolk (Children's Fund)	BME
Supplementary schools	Herts	I
Tendring and Colchester Minority Ethnic Partnership	Essex	BME
TRUST (Thurrock Racial Unity Support Taskgroup)	Thurrock	I
Upenyu Nerwamangwana Association	Beds	BME
WRDT (Westwood & Ravensthorpe Development Trust)	Peterborough	BME
YMCA Youth Inclusion Project	Cambs & Peterborough	I
Young Lives	Cambs	I
Young Suffolk	Suffolk	I
Zimbabwe Women's Network	Cambs	BME
Zimbabwe Youth Project	Ipswich, Suffolk	BME