



Understanding the impact of the economic down turn on BAME communities:

A case study of the Aylesbury estate in the London Borough of Southwark

**Karl Murray
September 2012**

About BTEG 2012

The Black Training and Enterprise Group was established in 1991 by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations and a group of black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) voluntary organisations. In 1996, BTEG registered as a charity (No 1056043) and company limited by guarantee (No 3203812). BTEG plays a unique role by supporting BAME civil society organisations, providing a national voice and promoting equality, inclusion, collaboration and entrepreneurship in BAME communities. BTEG is a respected and resilient organisation and celebrates its 21st anniversary this year.

BTEG contributes to the economic growth of BAME communities by building the capacity of local groups so that they can play an active role in improving opportunities for BAME individuals. We have a strong track record in influencing policies, campaigning and lobbying in relation to BAME education, employment and self-employment rates. BTEG recently hosted three regional good practice events focusing on apprenticeships and employment initiatives in London and Yorkshire. We maintain a constant dialogue with frontline organisations and a range of agencies including mainstream civil society organisations, government departments, local authorities, companies, the national apprenticeship service and the Equality and Human Rights Commission. BTEG sits on equality advisory groups in the Department for Work and Pensions and Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

BTEG Mission

BTEG's mission is to end racial inequality. We believe that the contribution of all communities makes a nation, builds dynamic local communities, generates wealth and improves well-being. We champion fairness, challenge discrimination and pioneer innovative solutions to empower BAME communities through education, employment and enterprise. Our activities involve working with Government, business, public services, BAME organisations and the media.

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

The continuing economic uncertainty and job losses have resulted in dramatic rises in unemployment and claimant rates for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) people. The most recent annual figures show that BAME Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) claimants now represent close to 50 per cent of claimants in the Capital.

Against this backdrop, BTEG was successful in obtaining funding from the Trust for London to undertake work around the impact and implications of the economic downturn on BAME employment prospects in London. A key aspect of the project is to identify practical actions to tackle BAME unemployment.

We have identified 15 London boroughs that met our criteria.¹ These are *Barking and Dagenham, Brent, Enfield, Greenwich, Hackney, Hammersmith and Fulham Haringey, Islington, Lambeth, Lewisham, Newham, Redbridge, Southwark, Tower Hamlets and Waltham Forest*. BTEG is undertaking focused work in the form of 'estate case studies' within six of these boroughs. The three estates this year (2011/12) are:

- The Aylesbury estate (London Borough of Southwark);
- The Cathall estate (London Borough of Waltham Forest);
- The Loughborough estate (London Borough of Lambeth).

This paper is based on the work within The Aylesbury estate.

Our approach

There is no single factor impacting on BAME communities within the labour market. For this study, we have considered three key London Borough of Southwark policy documents that we feel should have an impact on BAME communities in relation to employment opportunities and the role of the Creation Trust.

The key documents are:

- The Council's Economic Development Strategy
- The Children and Young People's Strategy as it relates to post-16 year olds not in education, employment or training (NEET);
- The Crime strategy as it relates to rehabilitation and employability; and
- The role of the Creation Trust as a prime vehicle in the regeneration of the Aylesbury estate.

BTEG's data has been produced through the following methodology:

¹ Key to our approach is a focus on neighbourhoods/estates within a local area. The four criteria were: BME profile, IMD ranking, employment and unemployment rates, compared to the London position. For further details please see Race Equality in Employment – Briefing, Issue 4, Dec'2011 (www.bteg.co.uk)

- i. Primary qualitative and quantitative data capture: here we explored the concerns and needs being faced by BAME individuals through interviews with providers of services as well as those who are unemployed (i.e. Aylesbury Information and Advice Guidance Centre (AIAG); Southwark Works; Community Safety Team and Economic Development Team; Central London Connexions Partnership²; Personal Advisors (NEET); Jobcentre Plus).
- ii. Interviews were conducted with young people (18-27yrs) at a workshop convened in partnership with Creation Trust and Jobcentre Plus; surveys undertaken of unemployed residents using the AIAG Centre, Elephant Jobs, Southwark Works (based at the Elephant and Castle Shopping Centre) and an on-line survey using *Survey Monkey*. Together these provided useful primary data and information (see Appendix 1).
- iii. A secondary and quantitative data trawl was conducted to better understand some of the needs within the area and on the estate. This included reports and data from the Council departments such as Economic Development, Community Safety and Children's Services. Additionally, primary quantitative data was obtained from the AIAG Centre and Creation Trust going back 10 years, which provided a useful context in terms of identifying particular concerns on the estate that predate the current economic downturn³.

SECTION 2: OVERVIEW OF SOUTHWARK

The London Borough of Southwark is made up of eight distinctive neighbourhoods that extend along the river Thames and down into South East London. Southwark is one of the inner city boroughs, situated to the south of the River Thames, sharing common borders with Lewisham and Lambeth. The Council is made up of 63 elected members representing 21 wards and supported by seven departments led by the Chief Executive (see Table 1 and Table 2).

Table 1: Elected Members' composition: 2010 to 2014

Gender	Ethnicity			Total
	Asian	Black	White	
Male	1	6	31	38
Female	2	5	18	25
Total	3	11	49	63

² Central London Connexions Partnership consist of: Lambeth, Southwark, Islington, Camden, Wandsworth, Westminster, and Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea.

³ In 2005 BTEG, working with Centre for Economic Social Inclusion (CESI), produced a report, which focused on the Elephant and Castle and the Aylesbury estate. This report provided a useful background and contrasting evidence in terms of progress and development over the intervening years.

The Aylesbury estate - London Borough of Southwark

Table 2: Strategic management team: Feb' 2012⁴

Gender	Ethnicity			Total
	Asian	Black	White	
Male			1	1
Female			6	6
Total	0	0	7	7

Source: www.southwark.gov.uk

Based on the GLA *Round Ethnic Group Projections (2007)*⁵ report and the Office for National Statistics *mid-year estimates (2007)* nearly two-thirds (63%) of Southwark's population is estimated to be White. The broad classification of the black ethnic population accounts for just over a quarter (27%) of Southwark's population, with Black African (16%) being the largest individual group and black Caribbean's accounting for 8% of the population. The remaining ethnic groups account for just over a tenth (11%) of Southwark's population.

Southwark is rapidly changing. It is being re-shaped by a range of regeneration programmes including The Shard (the tallest building in European Union), Elephant and Castle, Heygate and Aylesbury Estate programmes, Bermondsey Spa, Canada Water, Blackfriars, the former Woodene Estate in Peckham and most recently benefiting from a £4m regeneration programme to Burgess Park which aims to transform the park as a London wide attraction post-Olympics.

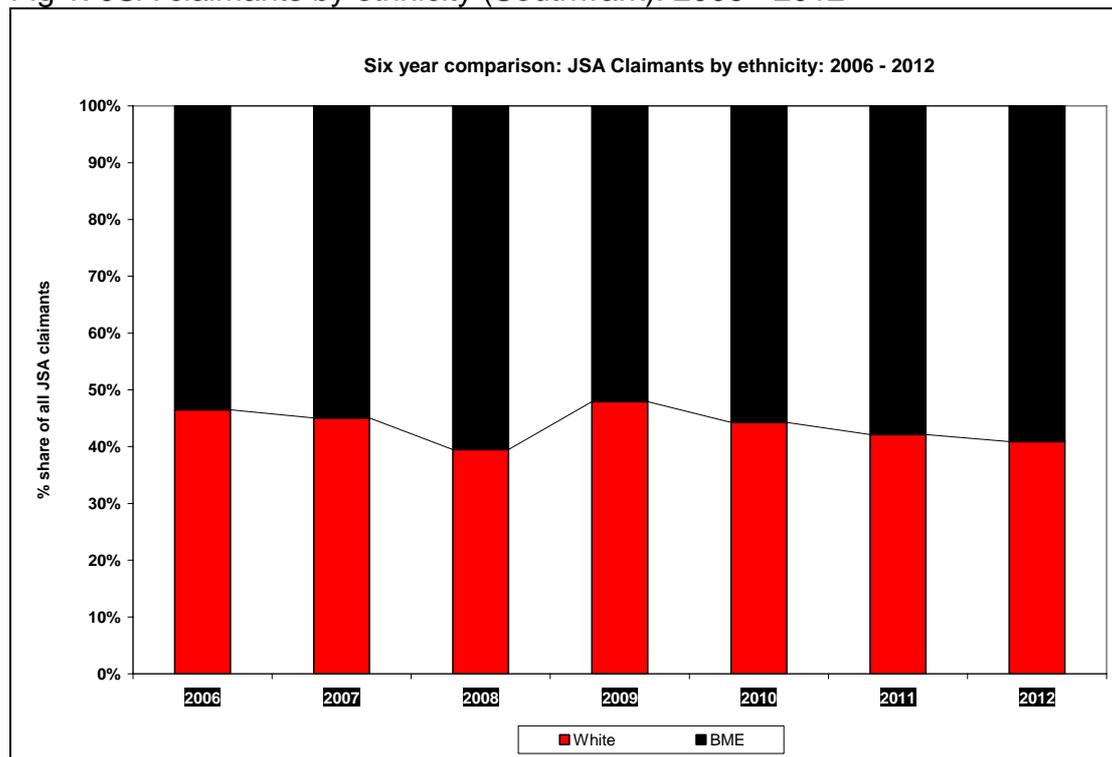
Southwark is the second most deprived borough in London, with an employment rate significantly below the London average: 62.8% compared to the London rate of 72%⁶. Furthermore, as Fig 1 below shows, the JSA claimant rate for Southwark over six years shows that the BAME claimant rate is consistently greater than that of White claimants (e.g. in 2008, at the start of the economic crisis, BAME JSA claimant rate was around 60% and four years on, it has not changed significantly, at around 59%).

⁴ Comprises the Chief Executive plus Directors of departments

⁵ The GLA PLP High and PLP Low 2007

⁶ NOMIS, May 2012

Fig 1: JSA claimants by ethnicity (Southwark): 2006 - 2012



This employment deprivation has persisted in spite of numerous national interventions over the past 25 years. Today there are new challenges arising from the Coalition Government. This has created the momentum and driving force for the revision and eventual production of the council's 2010 strategy which sought to respond to certain key challenges and opportunities that the borough faces.

Of particular concern is the impact and implications of recent local council spending plans, much of which has had an impact on how the council now works with partners, including local voluntary and community organisations and how it now sees itself in terms of its 'leadership' role. Many people have lost jobs because of public sector budget reductions, with many businesses closing or coming under threat of closure, with slow growth because of shrinkage from public expenditure.

Key policy documents

Within *The Economic Development Strategy 2010-2016 (EDS)* there are two approaches which imply 'enabling' (i.e. partnership and collaborative approaches) and 'directing' approaches (i.e. commissioning). The indication is that the council wishes to work with employers and the voluntary and community sector through more collaborative processes and partnership alignments, as well as commissioning strategically relevant and appropriate initiatives.

According to the Council, this approach should "make increasing inroads in tackling deprivation, inequality and child poverty through improving skills and

getting people into work, and in extending opportunities from recent economic growth across the borough". The council's strategy identifies key priority groups and the barriers they are facing; the enabling and directing programmes and practices are intended to address these. Table 3 below shows BAME groups, amongst others, are identified as one of the nine priority groups.

Table 3: Key priority groups and barriers to overcome⁷

Priority Groups	Barriers to Work for priority groups
BME groups; women; families with young dependents; lone parents; 18 -24 year olds; young people not in education, employment, or training (NEET) or at risk of becoming NEET; residents with physical, mental or learning disabilities; ex-offenders/young offenders; residents with alcohol or drug dependency; homeless people; refugees; those over age 50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited access to and awareness of services • Limited access to ESOL courses • Confidence and motivation • Lack of affordable and flexible childcare • Limited employer participation • Poor physical and mental health • Family issues and breakdown • Limited basic and soft skills • Limited vocational skills • Benefits trap/dependency

Source: Southwark Economic Development Strategy: 2010 – 2016

The second key document is the Children and Young People Strategy and takes the approach of 'directing' through 'commissioning.' BTEG is interested in the priorities relating to (a) Raising the bar - high-quality provision that meets local needs (i.e. raising attainment at 19 years); and (b) Succeeding into adulthood (i.e. those at risk of not achieving well-being; more young people in education, employment or training).

The Crime Strategy describes the devastating impact of crime on young people within the borough and sets out alternatives. Much has been written about the level of violent crime associated with south London and Southwark in particular⁸. Violent crime in London remains a concern for communities and services alike, with serious violence, and in particular knife crime and serious youth violence, at the top of the agenda.

Despite the fall across London of homicide since 2003/4, youth homicide more than doubled between 2003 and 2008, with one of the most worrying statistics to emerge was the tragic loss of 28 young people under the age of 19 (just

⁷ Priority groups identified within Economic Strategy, 2010 – 2016

⁸ See, for example, <http://www.voice-online.co.uk/article/why-do-youths-join-gangs>; <http://www.channel4.com/news/london-gun-crime-figures-worryingly-high>; Gunter, A (2010), Growing Up Bad?: Black Youth 'Road' Culture And Badness in an East London Neighbourhood, Tufnell Press, London

The Aylesbury estate - London Borough of Southwark

under 20% of the total number of homicides for that year)⁹. The vast majority of these were knife crimes. Despite noticeable successes in reducing violent crime within the borough,¹⁰ Southwark still experiences a high level of serious youth violence and weapon violence.

The strategy states that to make a long-term difference for future development and progress there needs to be an approach that “...is owned by all partners and gives a clear direction”. It is not surprising that the Economic Development Strategy identified ex-offenders/young offenders as a priority group. There is a disproportionate number of BAME people in the criminal justice system and there is concern about the high BAME re-offending (or recidivism) rate.

The extent to which ex-offenders find employment is a cause for concern for rehabilitation agencies. How policies and programmes tackle this is important as some may see crime as attractive in lieu of no work whilst others are already susceptible ‘to this market environment’.

The next aspect of our analysis is the role of the Creation Trust in the regeneration of the Aylesbury estate. The Creation Trust was established in 2010 as the successor organisation to the Aylesbury New Deal for Communities (NDC), which itself was established in 1998 to oversee the £56m major regeneration programme of the Aylesbury estate.

Unlike the NDC, which was council-led in terms of governance and strategic direction, the Trust was established to work as an advocate for tenants and residents by promoting a better working and living environment, healthier lifestyles and by increasing opportunities for all. Its primary aim is to support the regeneration ‘project’ on the estate by developing partnerships between communities, local and central government and businesses linked to the Aylesbury. A strong feature of this role relates to ‘worklessness’. Under the NDC this was tackled through the work of the Aylesbury Tackling Worklessness Together partnership, which was made up of key partners including Jobcentre Plus, the council’s Economic Development Team, Southwark Works and local providers.

The Aylesbury estate has undergone tremendous changes over the last 10 years as a result of NDC funding. The NDC ceased operation in April 2010, over which time it either wholly directly funded capital schemes or worked in partnership to co-fund projects, events and actions on the Aylesbury estate. In relation to employment and economic regeneration, a notable achievement was £1.9M towards the construction of a Community Learning Centre, which opened in 2009.

⁹ Southwark Violent Crime Strategy: 2010 – 2015, Safer Southwark Partnership, 2010

¹⁰ As the report points out, there has been a steady fall in violent crime over the last five years, with an overall reduction of nine percent (9%) since 2005/06. This means that there have been 1,116 fewer incidents of violent crime in Southwark over the last five years. This compares to a 14 percent reduction across London for the same time period (Violent Crime Strategy, 2010).

SECTION 3: AYLESBURY ESTATE CASE STUDY

The Aylesbury estate was built in the 1960s and 1970s and has 2,758 dwellings accommodating over 7,500 families, with 17% privately owned through right to buy schemes and only 2% of the dwellings are houses. The current regeneration plan aims to transform the Aylesbury over a 20 year period to provide for a vibrant community living in high quality homes and whose residents enjoy great streets, parks and open spaces, excellent public transport and a wide range of facilities¹¹.

- 47% of respondents believe that the activities of the NDC have improved the areas as a place to live (an increase of 26% on the 2002 satisfaction survey)¹².
- The Aylesbury Activate Programme has been highlighted as a model of good practice, which provides young people at risk of offending with the support, guidance and the opportunity to undertake positive activities they need to avoid offending and to fulfil their true potential in education, training and employment.
- Helped over 500 residents gain work-based employment skills.
- Provided employment and training projects culminating in over 300 residents benefiting.
- Established three community resource centres with over 5,000 people benefiting from the community based facilities.
- Supported over 68 projects that directly benefitted minority communities.
- Helped 215 unemployed residents into employment, created 88 jobs for local people and supported 15 people in starting up their own businesses
- 340 residents have gained computer skills through the information and computer technology access courses.

As the successor to the Aylesbury NDC the Creation Trust has continued the emphasis on tackling worklessness amongst Aylesbury residents, and from April 2012 will be working closely with the new developers, London and Quadrant in tackling this¹³. A starting point for the Trust has been to understand the employment reality for residents. It is crucial that the Trust pays attention to the implications for BAME communities who constitute 68% of residents (compared to 48% across the ward) who are disproportionately represented in the unemployment figures on the estate.

¹¹ See Plans on www.creationtrust.org.uk

¹² Ipsos MORI survey 2008

¹³ See Tackling Worklessness Together Partnership: A report to the Board, December 2011

The current profile shows that:

- Whilst progress has been made, the Aylesbury still has a higher than borough average rate of worklessness. The employment rate on the estate is 54.9% compared to the borough average of 62.8; the unemployment rate is 16.3% compared to the borough rate of 10.8%¹⁴.
- While much has been achieved in supporting Aylesbury residents into employment, the impact of the recent recession has led to increased unemployment and a changing composition of out of work claimant patterns on the estate with increasing numbers of residents claiming JSA [6.4% compared to the borough's average of 5.3% and the UK rate of 4.1%]¹⁵.

In tackling these challenges, the Creation Trust has embarked on a new approach with its **SE17Working** arrangement, ensuring that in “...*the development of a programme to tackle worklessness in and around the Aylesbury Estate*” they are aligned to the priorities enshrined in the *Southwark Economic Development Strategy 2010-2016*.” This will mean ensuring they develop and/or secure programmes and opportunities that are based on evidences of need and demand from the Aylesbury community and which fit with the wider objectives of:

1. Tackling the barriers to work faced by priority groups;
2. Increasing business and employer engagement; and
3. Raising skills levels for sustainable employment.

In relation to the needs of BAME jobseekers on the Aylesbury estate, our anecdotal evidence suggests that many of them are not accessing the Work Programme and therefore not benefiting from the wider Get Britain Working agenda, including the Youth Contract programme. We sought to explore these themes on the Aylesbury estate by trying to answer two principal questions:

1. *To what extent are BAME groups being supported to gain employment and/or employment skills? and*
2. *To what extent are policies and strategies making a difference?’*

The Aylesbury Information, Advice and Guidance Centre (AIAG)

Aylesbury Information, Advice and Guidance (AIAG) Centre is based on the Aylesbury and located in the Aylesbury Learning Centre (ALC) which was set up in 2009. The AIAG is a commissioned provision delivered by AL PAFENO, a Community Interest Company, led by a Chief Executive Officer and supported by a small team of volunteers. Its primary purpose is to provide information, advice and guidance to support those who are unemployed and

¹⁴ Nomis, March 2012

¹⁵ With respect to claimants between the ages of 18 – 24, the Faraday ward has one of the highest rates of claimants across all the wards (25.4% compared with a borough average of 22.3%); only Cathedral ward fared worse at 26.4% (Nomis, March 2012).

/or seeking careers guidance and support and who are residents on the estate as well as from across the borough generally. They work primarily with those 18 years and over.

As Figs 2 shows over the last five years (April 2007-March 2012), the AIAG worked directly with 1,100 unemployed, of which:

- 70% were Black, 18% were classified as White and 5% were as Asian;
- There were as many females as there were males (49% each) - 2% unspecified classification;
- The age range varied but with a strong presence from those within the 25-49 year old age range, representing 71% of all contacts during that period. Statistically those within the 19-24yrs and 50yrs+ age bands were the least reflected (14% and 13% respectively);
- Reasons for visiting the Centre varied but the vast majority attended for 1:1 guidance support (58%) and job searches (26%).

Fig 2: Age profile of visitors 2007-2012 at the AIAG

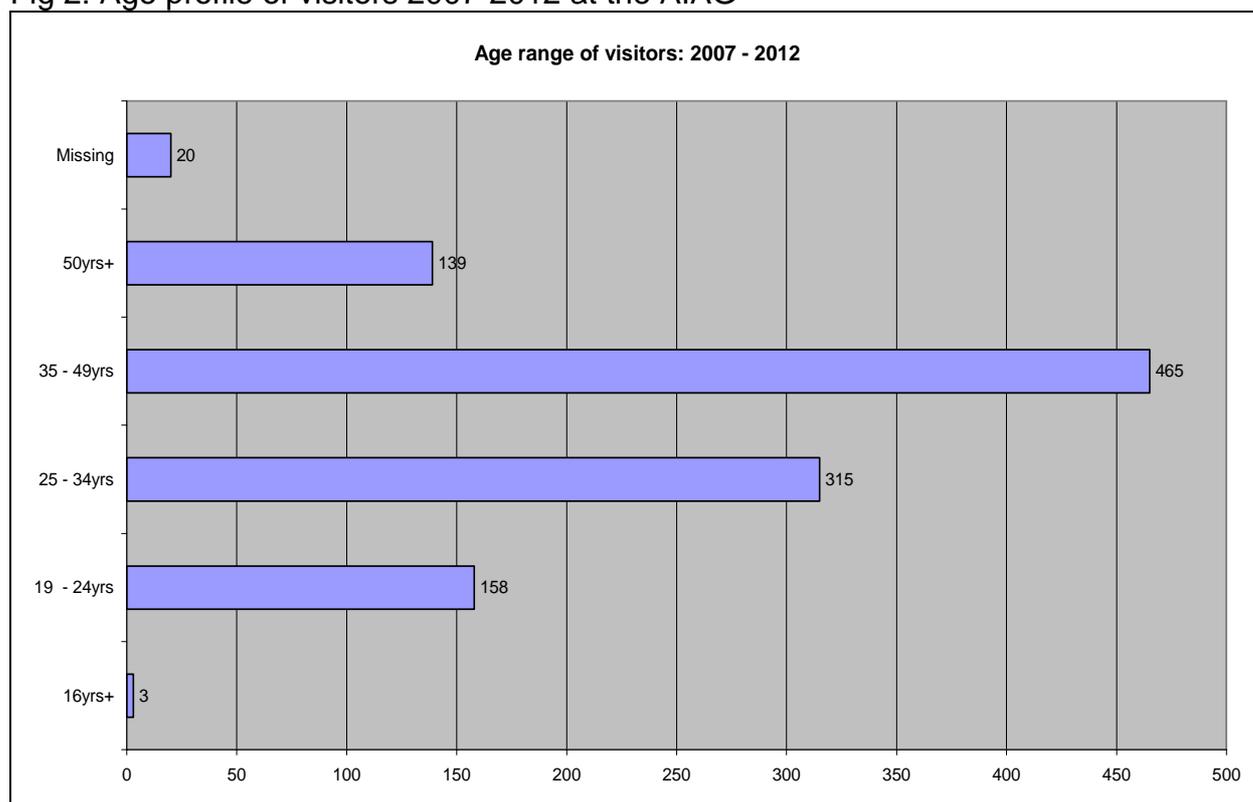
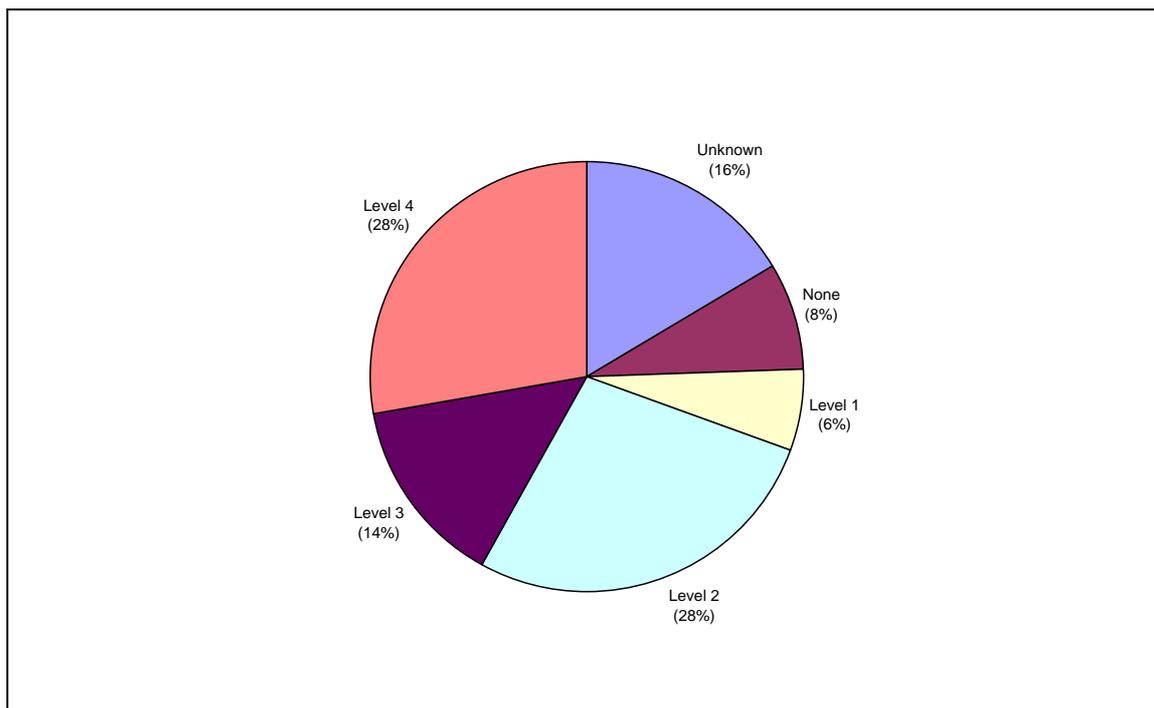


Fig 3: Qualification of unemployed visitors to the AIAG 2007 – 2012

In terms of qualifications of those who used the AIAG, just over 1 in four (28%) were qualified to Level 4 (i.e. degree level) while 24% had no, or did not specify any, qualifications. It was noticeable that the majority of users were 'qualified' and/or educated to at least Level 2 (equivalent to GCSEs A* - C);



SECTION 4: THE FINDINGS

VIEWS OF BAME JOBSEEKERS

Our analysis was informed by random interviews with 20 BAME individuals and an on-line survey of 21 respondents. With support from Southwark Works, the AIAG and Elephant Jobs a workshop took place at the Taplow Centre, coupled with interviews with policy and programme providers within the Creation Trust and AIAG.

The research has highlighted some of the barriers that many jobseekers are encountering in trying to re-enter employment or secure employment for the first time (especially young people). Four areas for consideration emerged:

1. Barriers to employment
2. De-motivation and despair
3. Career change and training
4. Access to personal development opportunities.

1. *Barriers to employment*

We have combined the interviews and survey responses of individuals and identified 11 barriers. Not ranked in order of importance, they were:

- Being young and lacking work experience
- Racial discrimination and/or ethnic stereotyping
- Criminal records

- Transferability of qualifications and limited awareness of skills requirements
- Not being shown respect
- Age restrictions with some employers, especially with regards to Apprenticeship programmes, where employers were said to be looking for apprentices under 25yrs
- Wages too low to meet financial and household commitments
- Language
- Lacking confidence
- Unable to produce an effective CV and inability to capture employability skills
- Lack of good information about employment opportunities.

In terms of what could be done to address some of the perceived barriers the respondents made the following suggestions:

- Relaxation of some of the rules governing take up of Apprenticeships (i.e. the qualification requirement)
- Financial support to access interviews (e.g. travel expenses, clothes, vouchers, etc)
- More classes/programmes (i.e. confidence building, motivation, interview techniques, simulation exercises etc)
- Opportunities for accredited training
- Help with job advancement and licensing regulations into some professions
- Encouragement to develop not- for- profit (estate based) employment opportunities¹⁶
- Improved interaction with the Jobcentre Plus.

2. *De-motivation and despair*

As a result of being unemployed, respondents reported a range of attitudes. For many, the experience was de-motivating and at times frustrating and depressing.

The following quotes reflect the range of feelings expressed:

“...very difficult and appalling the way I am living now; it’s not a human way to be living. No shelter. No job and no food. But I won’t kill myself, because of this! I live to tell the story...” [Black female unemployed aged 25-49yrs]

¹⁶ Only 1 person had heard about the NEA scheme and was going through the process of starting up his own business;

"I would like to be back to work soon." [Black male unemployed for 6mths aged 50-65yrs]

"de-motivated, low self-esteem and stressed" [Black female unemployed, aged 25-49yrs]

"Frustrated and see myself as failing; I feel de-motivated and doubting my own self and ability. It is demoralising going to interviews, and despite going for lower grade jobs, to be told you are not what they want! Even getting the most basic position is now a problem." [Black female unemployed aged 25-49yrs]

"...It is stressful being unemployed and trying to find work. It is a stressful time in my line of work (i.e. plasterer). I am now looking to a career change." [Black male unemployed aged 50-65yrs]

"...I am tired not working - it is frustrating. The impact of migrants from Eastern Europe is undermining the market I am in (construction) as they are seen to be cheaper. Employers are reducing wages and telling us to take it or leave because they can find cheaper labour." [Mixed heritage male unemployed aged 25-49yrs]

"...Stress, feel helpless, discrimination for certain positions; the system is unfair and we black and minority ethnic people are suffering: we need to work twice as hard to get a menial position. This can't be right!" [Black female unemployed aged 25-49yrs]

"I think I am motivated and committed in finding a job! Just unfortunate at times, the competition is quite large, especially applying for jobs that you desire but don't have the experience! And one of the only ways in my opinion to get experience is to be given the chance." [Black male, aged 18-24yrs]

3. Skills development training

Responses varied but the most common occupation areas that respondents came from were administration, retail and construction.

Respondents were asked about opportunities for skills development to improve their opportunities in different employment sectors. Most said they had to *"think about other career opportunities and possible training routes that they could access"*. They saw service providers such as the Aylesbury Information, Advice and Guidance (AIAG) Centre and Southwark Works as important provision that helped them in their job search.

"...I do some volunteering here at the AIAG so that I can help myself to be better trained as a receptionist rather than just sitting at home doing nothing. I approached the centre and asked if there were any opportunities to do some work experience. I was prepared to do anything, from receptionist to security." [Black female unemployed aged 25-49yrs]

"I am learning a new language and getting used to computers to help me search for jobs as well as opportunity using ICT. I have just completed my degree and now looking for a job." [Black female unemployed aged 25- 49yrs]

"...looking at catering initiative as a self-employed; I am currently going through the process of writing a business plan and seeking advice about finances. It is exhausting and frustrating at the same time but am learning; it is a steep learning curve as I need the income." [Black female unemployed aged 25-49yrs]

"...I have now been unemployed for 8 months and was in event management but now I can't get anything in this field. Now I am having to look at basic administrative and secretarial roles. The job market is such that there are many people looking for low paid jobs just to work and so I am finding that I have to dumb down by ability and qualification because they believe I am over qualified. They ask: 'why do you want this role' when you are so qualified for other things? When you are black and over a certain age, they don't want to know!" [Black female unemployed aged 25-49yrs]

"Belief in own self and hard work - it is scary as it is about mind-set. You need to ask yourself: why do you need to earn an income?" [Black male aged 18-24yrs]

"...just want to work so I can improve my life" [Black male, aged 18-24yrs]

The majority of the young people we interviewed expressed interest in exploring the following occupational sectors:

- Teaching
- Fitness instructor
- Technician/assistant positions (e.g. Teaching Assistant/Mentor/supporting role)
- Retailer
- Security
- Accountancy
- Banking
- Engineering
- ICT

4. Access to personal development opportunities

Respondents were asked what sort of support and/or development opportunities would help them in their job search. Volunteering was raised on a few occasions but most felt that it was not an option they would take because it was not 'paid' work and they had bills to pay. It might be that some

jobseekers have not been encouraged to see the benefits of volunteering in their community and improving their experience and CVs.

Some felt that, instead of volunteering, the time would be better spent developing their CVs and applying for vacancies. However, during the interviews many remarked on the lack of 'personal development' opportunities, such as confidence building and presentation skills, that were not widely available. Those who were unemployed for over one year remarked that *"...after a while you get used to being on benefits and start to get numb about what is out there and of your own skill"* [Black male unemployed 25-49yrs].

"...I have been supported by the information given to me and the assistance in helping me to fill forms and writing CV's, presentation format and advice on job search." [Black female unemployed]

"...I come here (AIAG) because I get advice and information and learn something new." [Black male unemployed aged 25- 49yrs]

"...we get support to putting CVs together and attend training such as setting up new businesses etc and get 1:1 advice and support." [Black female unemployed aged 25-49yrs]

"...Opportunities to socialise and off-load frustration is not always possible. To know that you are not alone makes a big difference in how you see yourself and possibilities. These will help you to cope better while striving to make ends meet." [Black female unemployed aged 25-49yrs]

"...Places like Jobcentre Plus do not help you to develop confidence. You are on your own. They show you vacancies and by the time you apply all the jobs have gone. We go on-line and there are so many people applying for the same job. So you feel despondent and frustrated but no one tries to help you cope with these, no one cares." [Black male unemployed aged 25- 49yrs]

"...my motivation is more to do with trying to develop the self." [Black male, aged 18-24yrs]

JOBSEEKERS SOLUTIONS

Some jobseekers identified actions that they felt would increase their prospects. These included:

1. Providing better careers information and advice about different sectors. For some *"....Jobcentre Plus staff know little especially when dealing with professionals."*
2. For the long-term unemployed, training opportunities, held in the mornings to encourage the habit of getting up to do something, with opportunities to address their health and well-being. As one respondent explained, *"...there is a lack of people who can understand and tackle your emotional and psychological problems. This is a key barrier in finding a job"*.
2. Basic computer training. As one respondent stated *"...I know what I'm doing but while attending [local provider name removed] roughly 75%*

of the people on the course didn't know how to use a computer. The Centre had computers with no software. We therefore need 'CREDIBLE TRAINING'."

3. Apprenticeships and work trials, "...providing training and encouragement into employment".

SECTION 5: ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Jobseekers reported a wide range of factors affecting their ability to gain employment. These correlate closely to the barriers listed in the council's economic development strategy noted in Table 3. In Appendix 1, we show how the council's barriers match with those emerging from Aylesbury jobseekers.

i. New Enterprise Allowance

Disappointingly, only two of the 41 individuals contacted indicated an awareness of the government's National Employment Allowance (NEA) scheme. One NEA participant stated that it is "...*hard work but it's about the mentality and motivation of the individual*". However, many jobseekers were interested in starting their own business but lacked the knowledge of what this would entail. There was also a certain amount of apprehension about taking this route.

ii. Services for the unemployed

The services provided by the AIAG, Elephant Jobs and Southwark Works for the unemployed were seen as valuable. Funding and resourcing these services will remain a challenge but they should remain a feature of the worklessness support infrastructure on the estate. The recent appointment of the *Worklessness Coordinator* within Creation Trust may be invaluable in providing some additional support in driving through the *SE17 Working* strategy.

iii. Barriers to work

Arising from this small study there are some emerging issues to highlight. Generally respondents felt "...*getting through the doors*" is a particular problem for them, while others commented on "...*experience, qualifications and gaps in CV*" as being barriers to overcome in trying to secure employment. Some said their age is an issue in finding employment. For others, especially those regarded as 'newly arrived migrants', the key issues are "...*lack of funding/grants for re-training*" and "...*policies do not encourage new refugees to engage in work and access to funded training*" and further that "...*having no work experience in the UK*" places them at greater disadvantage.

iv. Ethnic monitoring and analysis

Despite the council's recognition of the impact of unemployment on BAME groups, there is not much evidence of robust monitoring taking place in relation to this priority group. Where there is monitoring, there was no

evidence of analysis of how this monitoring informed practice, especially in relation to re-focusing resources and support.

The majority of the visitors to the Aylesbury AIAIG, the Learning Centre more generally and Southwark Works are BAME and with the exception of the AIAIG provision, it was not possible to obtain any data on take up.

Though the Council's Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) outlined some of the principal concerns regarding the context against which the Economic Development Strategy (EDS) and the other strategies were developed, the Action Plans that followed had no indication of the support that would be put in place to overcome some of the specific concerns with regards to BAME people. Consequently, it is difficult to see how policy and practice are aligned for improved effectiveness. All targets within the EDS Action Plan were 'generic' to all groups which made it difficult to determine the extent to which any particular initiative or programme was having an effect and as such determine relevance of the policy approach and direction. This in turn raises the question as to whether these initiatives and programmes are likely to benefit or support BAME individuals and communities.

We think that there is a need for synergy between and across a number of key policy themes around economic development. It was unclear to us what evaluation was being undertaken overall and within which specific policy strands/programmes.

For instance, the recently commissioned NEET funding programme through the Youth Service (May 2012) seems to be supporting 'historically' funded programmes but with no evidence of past programme evaluation or clear plans on how they would tackle NEET and BAME communities as priority groups. In fact, the guidelines failed to identify BAME young people as a criterion within the application process. There are no simple solutions but we do need to move away from an '*ethnic neutral*' approach.

v. Diversity issues

We found a low number of South Asians accessing the employment/skills centres but this might reflect their 4% profile in the ward. In relation to age the number of 25-49 year old unemployed men and women on the Aylesbury estate appears higher than for those who are between 16-24yrs. The majority of visitors using the AIAIG, Elephant Jobs and Southwark Works are over 25 years.

Ex-offender needs were identified. Through Southwark Works and the Community Safety Team of the Council, the Reducing and Deterring Adult Re-conviction (RADAR) programme was established to engage with those ex-offenders who need to reconnect with the world of employment. This pilot project is funded locally with outreach development work taking place with ex-offenders to re-engage them into gainful employment following release from prison. The signs were that building trust and confidence as well as having realistic work experience is crucial.

Appendix 1: Comparison of BTEG and Southwark Council's barriers to work

Note: Red highlighted texts refers to those areas that closely match or are the same as those identified within the EDS

Southwark EDS key priority groups and barriers to overcome (EDS framework ¹⁷)		Barriers identified from BTEG estate based work (Southwark)
Priority Groups	Barriers to work for priority groups	
<p>BME groups; women; families with young dependents; lone parents; 18 -24 year olds; young people not in education, employment, or training (NEET) or at risk of becoming NEET; residents with physical, mental or learning disabilities; ex-offenders/young offenders; residents with alcohol or drug dependency; homeless people; refugees; those over age 50</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited access to and awareness of services • Limited access to ESOL courses • Confidence and motivation • Lack of affordable and flexible childcare • Limited employer participation • Poor physical and mental health • Family issues and breakdown • Limited Basic and Soft Skills • Limited vocational skills • Benefits trap/dependency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transferability of qualifications and limited awareness of skills requirements • Low wages and higher financial and household commitments • Lacking confidence • Unable to produce an effective CV and inability to capture employability skills • Lack of good information about opportunities • Age discrimination - being young and lacking experience • Racial discrimination and/or stereotyping • Criminal records • Language support - business and employment related

¹⁷ Priority groups identified within Southwark Economic Development Strategy, 2010 – 2016, Southwark Council