

Develop local solutions

THE MESSAGE:

Locally developed place based approaches to tackling poverty linked to ethnicity encourage collaboration between local stakeholders, including local employers, and lead to sustainable solutions.

WHERE WE HAVE LEARNED THIS:

The importance of local, place based solutions is demonstrated in the project led by

Women Like Us. Working in the Streatham area of south London, Women Like Us has established multiple channels and contacts to encourage local women from Somali and Pakistani backgrounds to use their services. These routes include developing the role of local Parent Ambassadors. Parent Ambassadors help women in their social networks to access services, often these are other mums at the school gate.

CASE STUDY

Ayaan* is a Somali mum living in Streatham. She is a lone parent with two children at primary school. Now in her early 30s, she secured GCSEs at school in the UK and has since then trained as a Teaching Assistant although has no work experience in this role and has not worked since her children were born.

Ayaan heard about Women Like Us from a Parent Ambassador at her children's school. She wanted to find out more, so the Parent Ambassador arranged an initial meeting with Zavery, a Women Like Us adviser. Zavery met Ayaan in Streatham Library, an accessible location close to where she lives. At this first meeting, Ayaan explained that she was keen to find work and had applied for many jobs in a range of roles but none of her applications had been successful. As she felt that she had the relevant skills and experience, Ayaan was concerned that this lack of success might be due to prejudice, which was impacting on her motivation and confidence. Zavery reviewed Ayaan's CV and talked through her work experience, aspirations and challenges. A plan for support was put in place.

Over the following months, Ayaan and Zavery were in regular contact, in person or by phone or e-mail, and always at times and locations that fit with Ayaan's childcare responsibilities. With Zavery's practical help and encouragement Ayaan has secured a Teaching Assistant role at a local school, which she will start in the new school year. The job hours mean that her own childcare will not be an issue.

However, the median salary for a Teaching Assistant in London is close to £14,000 per year, which leaves Ayaan well below JRF's Minimum Income Standard (£33,000 p.a. for a lone parent with two primary school age children) and still at poverty level. Ayaan will remain reliant on state benefits to subsidise her full time earnings and exposed to the risks of the transition out of poverty. Ayaan can continue to draw on Zavery's support when she is ready to attempt further steps on her long climb out of poverty.

**Ayaan is not her real name*

To find out more about how Women Like Us is developing local solutions in local areas, contact Rachael Bailey, Development Director, Women Like Us, Rachael.Bailey@womenlikeus.org.uk

Reducing poverty across all ethnic groups in the UK

THIS is the second in a series of Briefing Papers aimed at sharing learning from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) Poverty and Ethnicity Demonstration Programme.

Research by JRF shows that ethnic minority people in the UK are up to twice as likely to be in poverty as white British people. To find practical ways of tackling poverty linked to ethnicity JRF has commissioned four small scale demonstration projects. From April 2016 to August 2018 these projects will test and evaluate models of helping ethnic minority individuals to move out of poverty or the risk of poverty.

The Black Training and Enterprise Group (BTEG) is supporting JRF to manage and learn from the Poverty and Ethnicity Demonstration Programme, a role which includes producing these Briefing Papers.

Practice messages

This Briefing Paper highlights four 'practice messages' which are emerging from the demonstration projects. By 'practice messages' we mean messages which are focused on practical ways of working. We think these messages will be of interest to other organisations similarly engaged in delivering practical solutions to the problems of poverty and ethnic inequality.

Behind each message lies a body of more detailed information which is growing as the demonstration projects progress. BTEG can share this information with anyone who

wants to learn more about these practice messages.

The emerging messages highlighted in this Briefing Paper are:

- Focus on ethnic inequalities.
- Manage the risks of moving out of poverty.
- Develop local solutions.
- Promote positive narratives about ethnicity.

In addition to the information in this Briefing Paper, these messages will be further explored in our programme of learning workshops, to which external participants are welcome. The themes, locations and dates for future workshops are provisional but will potentially cover:

- **Managing the risks of the transition into work**
London, Feb 2018
- **Engaging employers through positive narratives about ethnicity**
Bradford, April 2018
- **Local solutions: place based actions to tackle poverty linked to ethnicity**
London, June 2018

For more information about the JRF Poverty and Ethnicity Programme or the forthcoming learning workshops, contact Indra Nauth, indra@bteg.co.uk

Focus on ethnic inequalities

AN explicit focus on ethnic inequalities, including targeted support for specific ethnic groups, generates new interventions and solutions to tackling poverty.

The JRF Poverty and Ethnicity Programme focus on ethnicity has encouraged demonstration projects to explore new ways of overcoming the multiple barriers which result in higher rates of poverty for some ethnic minority populations. These new approaches include:

Bradford Council is testing ways in which local textile manufacturing employers can address their skills shortages by recruiting Asian women. This is a sector in which very few Asian women are employed, in a city where large numbers of Asian women are looking for paid work, and using sewing skills which some Asian women already have and others are keen to develop. The Council is putting practical measures in place to bridge the gap between the needs of the employers and this potential pool of employees.

Women Like Us is exploring new ways of engaging with working mums from Somali and Pakistani communities. Somali and Pakistani women are among those people

least likely to be in employment and most likely to be in poverty. But many are unaware of or afraid to use the services which could help them to find decent jobs. Women Like Us is testing what works to reach Somali and Pakistani working mums and to support them to achieve their employment aspirations.

Crisis Brent is supporting ethnic minority people to make the transition from unemployment into sustainable paid employment. This transition is a complex and risky one for some groups. Crisis Brent is finding that people who are particularly vulnerable to the risks of changing their benefit arrangements by moving into work include EU nationals, people with poor English skills, and those with limited IT skills or internet access.

With a working group of transport companies, the **Mayors Fund for London** is exploring ways of encouraging transport employers to take a more proactive approach to recruiting an ethnically diverse workforce. This group is currently developing a 'diversity pledge' which will demonstrate the commitment to promoting workforce ethnic diversity from those transport sector employers that sign up.

and EU nationals, for whom the benefit rules are more complex, are particularly at risk.

WHERE WE HAVE LEARNED THIS:

The Crisis Brent demonstration project is finding that their clients (nearly all of them from ethnic minority backgrounds) need long term support, often for months, to make a successful transition into work.

Manage the risks of moving out of poverty

THE MESSAGE:

Personalised, flexible support with 'no wrong doors' helps people to make the move from out of work poverty into better paid employment by, critically, helping to manage the risks of this transition, which include the very real risk of becoming poorer if benefit payments are delayed or reduced in this process. All ethnic groups face these challenges, but people with poor English, limited IT access,

CASE STUDY



Ali*, 60, lives with his wife and two adult children in a three bedroom house in Harlesden. His daughter is working but neither his wife nor son are able to work due to medical conditions. Ali had not worked since arriving in the UK as a refugee from Somalia 10 years ago. The Crisis Brent team supported him to start a job at a local foodbank for 24 hours per week at £7.20 per hour, and helped him to manage the transitions this meant for his household income.

Prior to starting his job Ali was on Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) and his full rent (almost £2,000 per month) was paid by Housing Benefit. Ali did not know about the benefits he or his family were entitled to once he started work. A Crisis Brent coach advised him about Working Tax Credit (WTC) to supplement his income and about Employment

Support Allowance for his son. Ali was paying for his wife's expensive medication so his coach helped him to apply for a health care certificate to receive free medical help. She also helped him to apply for an over 60s oyster card for free travel. Throughout this time Ali's coach kept the relevant benefit departments fully informed about the changes in his income. But even with professional support the financial transition was not straightforward. The government made an error on Ali's WTC claim and wrongly demanded that he should repay an apparent overpayment. The Crisis Brent coach was required to intervene three times to ensure Ali's entitlement was calculated correctly and the error rectified.

After starting his job, Ali signed up for in-work progression support from Crisis Brent, with the aim of increasing his earned income. Due to his age and general health Ali was finding 24 hours a week in work very strenuous, so was also seeking to reduce his hours. With a lot of support from the Crisis Brent coach to negotiate with the employer, and the employer signing up to pay the London Living Wage, Ali was able to reduce his hours to 18 per week on an hourly rate of £9.75. This increased the income from his job by £29 per week. But although Ali's earnings have increased he is not better off. This is due to increased income leading to reductions in WTC and HB and Ali having to pay a significant rent shortfall. Crisis Brent's calculations show that even if Ali worked full-time at London Living Wage, he would not be lifted out of poverty.

*Ali is not his real name.

To find out more about how Crisis Brent is providing flexible, personalised support to help people manage the risks of moving into work, contact Anita Silberbauer, Progression Manager, Crisis Brent, anita.silberbauer@crisis.org.uk

Promote positive narratives about ethnicity

THE MESSAGE:

A positive narrative which links local business success with employing local people from under-represented ethnic groups encourages employers to re-think their traditional recruitment approaches, without imposing any additional burdens.

WHERE WE HAVE LEARNED THIS:

This approach is being demonstrated in Keighley, where Bradford Council and part-

ners, including Keighley College and Keighley Asian Women and Children Centre, have enthused local textile manufacturing employers to try new ways of attracting Asian women to fill skilled job vacancies. This approach is also demonstrated by the Mayor's Fund for London who are helping transport companies to meet skills shortages by recruiting from a wider, more ethnically diverse candidate pool.

CASE STUDY



STEVE Shrimpton is the Managing Director of JTS Cushions, a soft furnishing manufacturer established in Keighley in 2001. Steve has been instrumental in developing a new Textile Academy at Keighley College and is

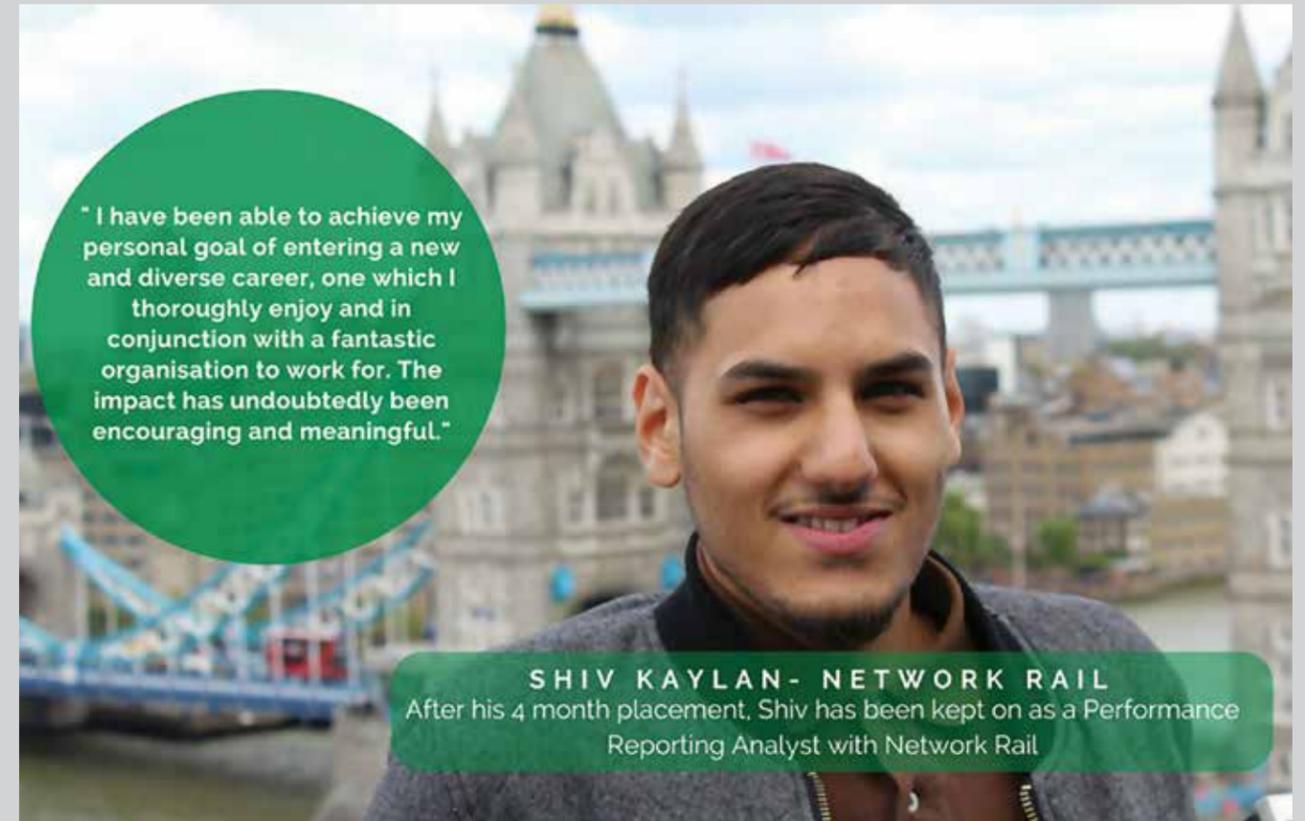
one of several employers represented on the Textile Academy Board that oversees the Academy. The Textile Academy provides elementary sewing machine training to help meet the skills shortages in the textile industry in Keighley and across the Aire Valley.

The first Textile Academy recruits began training in spring 2017 and already JTS has employed three trainees from this cohort. The three new JTS employers are all Asian women who were previously unemployed and are now in jobs with potential to earn high wages as their machine skills improve.

Steve regards a local, dependable workforce as crucial to the success of his business. He has contributed financially to the set up costs of the Academy, provided materials and helped to devise the course content.

To find out more about how Bradford Council is helping to drive business growth in order to tackle poverty linked to ethnicity, contact Mark Clayton, Strategy & Engagement Officer, City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council, mark.clayton@bradford.gov.uk

CASE STUDY



NETWORK Rail recognise a growing skills shortage in the transport sector with an ageing workforce and lower take up of opportunities from traditional recruitment methods. In addition to the skills gap, Network Rail are keen to ensure their workforce reflects the communities in which they operate, with a focus on redressing the under-representation of ethnic minority employees in supervisory through to senior management positions.

To address these issues, Network Rail Cross-rail programme has worked with Mayor's Fund for London to develop a placement scheme providing candidates with three months of paid work experience, at the London Living Wage, underpinned by a package of pastoral support. The scheme is designed to

reach an ethnically diverse candidate pool and raise awareness about career progression opportunities in Network Rail and the wider industry. The scheme provides valuable work experience and links to the industry.

At the end of each placement Mayors Fund for London supports trainees to apply for permanent opportunities with Network Rail or other transport companies.

To find out more about how the Mayor's Fund for London is supporting ethnically inclusive business growth, contact Sietske van der Ploeg, Head of Portfolio Performance and Social Impact, Mayors Fund for London, svanderploeg@mayorsfundforlondon.org.uk