

**DWP Welfare to work and  
Equality Directorate**

## **Equality Impact Assessment**

**Equality The Partners' Outreach for Ethnic  
Minorities Programme of Pilots**

# The Partners' Outreach for Ethnic Minorities (POEM) Programme of Pilots

## Introduction

The Partners' Outreach for Ethnic Minorities (POEM) programme of pilots began in March 2007, was initially funded for one year, and later extended to run for a second year to the end of March 2009. POEM was designed to support partnered people of working age who were not in contact with Jobcentre Plus services and who were neither working nor claiming out of work benefits. Support was to be targeted towards non-working partners in low-income families, from ethnic groups (specifically from Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Somali backgrounds) who faced particular barriers to employment and who were living in areas of high disadvantage and high ethnic minority population. POEM was directed towards all ethnic minority groups, with a particular focus on women from those communities, as they have some of the lowest rates of economic activity in Great Britain (GB).

The aim of the programme was to move clients into work. It was recognised, however that some people would be a considerable distance from the labour market, and may have improved their employability but not have obtained work by the end of the pilot year.

This equality impact assessment is designed to assess the impact of the two year POEM programme of pilots as a targeted outreach programme. Targeted outreach proved successful through Ethnic Minority Outreach (EMO)<sup>1</sup>. An initial screening of the equality impact of POEM was completed in March 2007.

## Purpose and aim of the proposal

In the Pre-Budget Report 2005 (PBR), the Chancellor announced a measure to implement recommendations highlighted in the National Employment Panel (NEP) report: *'Enterprising People, Enterprising Places'* (May 2005). These recommendations aim to support people, who are neither working nor claiming benefit, by focusing on outreach as the most effective way of engaging with this group.

POEM supported these recommendations, and made a contribution to improving support for those people from ethnic minorities who are disengaged from the labour market and unlikely to use mainstream Jobcentre Plus services. POEM should also contribute towards the Department for Work and Pensions, Public Service Agreement targets on reducing child poverty and reducing the employment gap between ethnic minorities and the overall population.

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<sup>1</sup> Initial Equality Impact screening Ethnic Minorities Employment Partnerships Division, National Tier March 2007

POEM was intended to offer support to overcome barriers to work, specifically around:

- Family and carer responsibilities.
- Language and skill barriers.
- Resistance from family and community, arising from religious and cultural traditions.
- Lack of accessible and affordable childcare.
- Artificial or discriminatory barriers to employment.
- Lack of access to jobs that are culturally acceptable and that provide flexible working patterns.

Prospective customers were to be resident in 430 selected wards within the six cities highlighted in the National Employment Panel report: London, Birmingham, Manchester, Bradford, Leeds and Leicester, all of which have high proportions of non-working ethnic minorities and high levels of deprivation.

Evidence shows that ethnic minority partners of people on low incomes, particularly Bangladeshi, Pakistani and Somali women are less likely to use mainstream services.

The primary target customer group for POEM were:

- Non-working partners primarily from Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Somali backgrounds, who see themselves as being in low income households and are, in their own right, not receiving; Jobseekers Allowance (individually or as part of a joint claim), Income Support or Incapacity Benefit.
- People of working age.
- People who are not full time students.

## **Cultural Background**

Migration from Bangladesh peaked in the 1980s. Today there remains a slight predominance of males in the British Bangladeshi population. The population's age profile is notably young.

Pakistani migration to Britain largely took place slightly earlier than Bangladeshi migration, beginning in the late 1950s and peaking in 1961. This peak was due to the passing of a new immigration law which put an end to the previously free entry of British Commonwealth workers (although it still allowed family reunion). People from Pakistan mainly came to Britain to improve their economic prospects. Men initially tended to come alone, with families following once they had settled.

The first wave of Somali migration to Britain took place in the mid-1800s. The second wave started in the late 1950s, and the recession in the 1970s left many Somali migrants unemployed and their situation has improved little since then.

The conflict and political and economic problems in Somalia in the late 1980s and 1990s led to a large third wave of migration to Britain of mainly single women and children. Since 2000, many Somali migrants with citizenship of the Netherlands or a Scandinavian country have migrated to Great Britain, as they were separated from family members and friends during the civil war. Those who obtained citizenship of a European Union (EU) country can move and work freely within the EU. They have settled in London but also a number of cities elsewhere, including Liverpool, Manchester, Leicester, Birmingham and Sheffield. Great Britain now hosts the largest Somali community outside Somalia.

## **Providers**

The procurement exercise began in October 2006. The project became operational in February 2007 outside London and March 2007 in London and has been delivered by private and voluntary sector organisations with a proven track record in assisting ethnic minority communities.

Providers were required to ensure that they are compliant with Agreed Equality Policy for the duration of the contract. Each of their direct subcontractors employed in the performance of the contract were also required to adopt and implement an equality and diversity policy in respect of their employees. Ethnic Minority Enterprises (meaning an enterprise 51% or more of which is owned by members of one or more ethnic minority groups, or, if there are few owners, where at least 50% of the owners are members of one or more ethnic minority groups) were involved in the tendering process with one of the six businesses procured being an Ethnic Minority Enterprise. Providers were required to comply with agreed diversity training and to adopt and implement an equality and diversity policy in respect of employees engaged in the contract.

POEM has been delivered by contracted providers in ten designated areas, six of which were in London, with the others in Birmingham, Bradford, Leicester and Manchester. The ward selection criteria for POEM is based on the proportion of non-employed ethnic minority people living in the area taken from the 2001 census data, and the level of deprivation using the then Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's Index of Multiple Deprivation

## **Programme evaluation**

An evaluation of the pilots was carried out by The Institute for Employment Studies on behalf of DWP and the interim report was published in February 2009. The report shows that POEM's approach of focussing on outreach has been beneficial, and highlights 'the important contribution that POEM has made in moving clients, who had not found employment in their first year, closer towards the labour market. The qualitative results are very positive:

- Few, if any, of the clients interviewed who were in work thought they would have found their jobs without the help of POEM.
- Most clients interviewed said that POEM had helped them greatly. Whether they had found work through POEM or not they felt they were closer to their goals than they had been.
- POEM clients were generally very pleased with the support they had received and few of them had any suggestions for the ways in which POEM could be improved.

Some providers were more successful than others. Findings are:

- POEM has so far achieved 77% (8730) of the participant level and 71% (2364) of the job entry target with data only having been collected to December 08 and job start statistics likely to improve towards the end of the project.
- Within this there has been wide regional variation, with Yorkshire and Humber, the West Midlands and the North West having met or very nearly met the job entry targets already, London and the East Midlands (mainly due to the bankruptcy of the original contractor) being a long way behind.
- We expected more female participants than male because of the target group, however male job entries made up 52% of the total.
- 12% of all job entries were from White British, White Irish or Other White groups.
- And 32% of all job entries were not from the target groups of Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black African ethnicity.<sup>2</sup>

Although there is some strong qualitative evidence to support outreach as an approach to getting ethnic minority people closer to the labour market, the quantitative evidence is very mixed. It is probable that a number of ineligible clients accessed POEM provision.

## **Impact of the Programme of Pilots on Different Groups**

### **Race**

Across the providers as a whole, the largest of the key target groups recruited was Black African (30%), although the way ethnicity data is collected means it is unclear how many of these were from a Somali background. Pakistani and Bangladeshi clients engaged across all the provider areas accounted for a similar proportion overall (and 17% and 15% respectively).<sup>3</sup>

Individuals from other white backgrounds (non-UK or Irish) comprised 8% of the total clients. The remainder (28.6%) came from a range of different ethnic backgrounds, with Indians forming a significant minority group at 10% of the total.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Source: POEM Management Information, DWP, 2008.

<sup>3</sup> Source: POEM Management Information, DWP, 2008.

<sup>4</sup> Source: POEM Management Information, DWP, 2008.

When comparing the client profiles of the London providers with those from outside London, a very different picture emerges. In London, the largest of the target groups was black African (39%) with Bangladeshis forming 15% and Pakistanis just over 9% of the total. Outside London, however, Pakistanis formed the largest client group (36%) with Bangladeshis the second largest (16%) and black Africans the smallest of the target groups (9%). Slightly higher proportions of other white clients were recruited by providers in London at 9%, compared to just below 6% by providers outside London.<sup>5</sup>

These differences broadly match with the proportions of Asian and black African communities in England, with a higher proportion of black Africans living in London than is found elsewhere in England.

### **Gender**

The economic activity rate of Bangladeshi women is very low, at around 25% and as such, they have the highest GB inactivity rate by ethnic group and gender. The economic activity rate of Bangladeshi men is much higher, at 70%.<sup>6</sup>

There are often cultural expectations amongst both genders that a woman should look after her home and family rather than go out to work, at least while children are pre school age. Although for younger generations of women, this is now less of an issue than in the past. The Government Equalities Office's work with the Fawcett Society is evidence that ethnic minority women are encouraged by parents and guardians to work.<sup>7</sup> Some women prefer to rely on their extended family for childcare assistance. Bangladeshis have a particularly high rate of illness, leading to many women having additional caring responsibilities beyond looking after children.

Pakistani women have the next lowest economic activity rate after Bangladeshi women by ethnic group and gender, at 31%, while in contrast, the economic activity rate of Pakistani men is just over 70%.<sup>8</sup> Women tend not to work for the same reasons as Bangladeshi women: due to family responsibilities.

Since 1990, 60% of the people who have arrived from Somalia are female. Again, the age profile is young with just over 90% aged under 45.<sup>9</sup>

A higher proportion of women than men were recruited across all the providers, at 57% compared to 43%. This gender balance remained fairly consistent across both London providers and those outside London.<sup>10</sup>

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5 Source: POEM Management Information, DWP, 2008.

6 Office for National Statistics (ONS), Annual Population Survey, January 2004 to December 2004, [www.statistics.gov.uk/](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/)

7 Fawcett Society research on Ethnic Minority Women: Routes to Power by Dr Marie-Claude Gervais

8 Office for National Statistics (ONS), Annual Population Survey, January 2004 to December 2004, [www.statistics.gov.uk/](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/)

9 Office for National Statistics (ONS), Annual Population Survey, January 2004 to December 2004, [www.statistics.gov.uk](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/)

10 Source: POEM Management Information, DWP, 2008.

Providers indicated that they had generally recruited more men to the project than they had expected. Typically, these were young men who had recently settled in the country on marital visas; they had very little English and were unfamiliar with the labour market. Assistance in tuning aspirations to opportunities available in the local economy, and support in presenting themselves effectively to employers was required.

Childcare support funded through POEM presented a valuable opportunity for women clients with young children, as many were mainly interested in work which was during school hours only. Many clients had not accessed childcare in the past. Some clients did not use the formal childcare provision, preferring to look after their children themselves with the assistance of their family. Providers in some project areas encouraged the use of childminders from the same cultural background as the clients, where they were reluctant to leave their children with carers outside the immediate community.

Some female clients also had additional responsibilities to their extended family, for example, there were expectations that they would take time off from other commitments to visit family overseas or to look after sick family members. As one provider pointed out, these responsibilities could give rise to conflict with employer expectations and standard 'compassionate leave' policies in the workplace.

### **Disability**

At the time of application, customers who are already accessing Jobcentre Plus services and are in receipt of any of the following benefits in their own right, are **not** eligible to start on POEM provision:

- Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) individually or as part of a Joint Claim;
- Incapacity Benefit (IB); or
- Income Support (IS)

Customers receiving these benefits will already be accessing job search assistance and support from their Jobcentre Plus Personal Advisor.

If the customer received any other benefits, for example, Working Tax Credit, Housing Benefit or Child Benefit they are eligible to access POEM. Although this eligibility condition would exclude disabled people receiving Incapacity Benefit, the rules would be equal to all benefit recipients regardless of whether they were disabled people.

There were only a small number of clients recruited to the programme who had declared a disability. This figure was around 1% for all providers.

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## **Religion and Belief**

The vast majority (92%) of Bangladeshis and Pakistanis (92%) are Muslim. Although people from Somalia share language and faith (Islam), their class, area of origin in Somalia, generation and age at time of arrival make it a very diverse community. There is evidence of a growing Christian community within this group.

## **Age**

The largest age group across all providers was 25–34 years (36%) with 30% of clients aged 18–24 and 26 % aged 35–49. This represents a fairly young age profile overall, with the majority of the client population (66%) aged under 35. Their employment rate is around 44%.<sup>11</sup>

## **Sexual Orientation**

No data was collected to determine accurately the sexual orientation of the people accessing POEM.

## **Lessons learned**

Not surprisingly as the eligibility conditions excluded those in contact with Jobcentre Plus, the majority of POEM clients were considered by providers to be a long distance from the labour market, and likely to take longer to reach ‘job-readiness’ than clients on other programmes, as they tended to face a wider range of barriers.

Barriers included:

- Unfamiliarity with the GB labour market and lack of appropriate job search.
- Skills; not knowing how to sell themselves to an employer.
- Lack of GB work experience or never having worked in GB at all.
- Lack of qualifications or non-GB qualifications; difficulty in gaining recognition of overseas qualifications.
- Low levels of English language.
- Lack of confidence and self-esteem; low awareness of transferable skills.
- Childcare responsibilities and lack of access to appropriate, affordable childcare.
- Social and cultural barriers, for example, family resistance to women entering.
- The labour market or restrictions on the kinds of jobs they could do;
- Unrealistic expectations about the types of jobs they were likely to access.<sup>12</sup>

## **Policy implications**

There is qualitative evidence that outreach works for this customer group and there are lessons learned for any future DWP outreach programmes, for example:

- Allowing time for outreach provision to become established within the communities.

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<sup>11</sup> Research Report No 561 - Institute for Employment Studies on behalf of DWP

<sup>12</sup> Research Report No 561 - Institute for Employment Studies on behalf of DWP

- Ensuring that funding mechanisms adequately reward success while recognising the risks involved for the provider.

## **Changes made**

Providers were reminded of the eligibility conditions in year two as the evaluators had been offered a number of non-eligible clients to interview in year one of the programme of pilots.

## **Next steps**

The working Neighbourhood Fund provides a funding package of £1.5b targeted towards worklessness, and aims to cover 52% of ethnic minority people who are out of work. Partners' Outreach for Ethnic Minorities (POEM) providers have been encouraged to work with appropriate City Strategy Pathfinders and Working Neighbourhood Fund local authorities to enable them to consider whether funding is available at the end of the pilots. In Leicester, for example, POEM clients are to transfer to City Strategy provision from April 2009.

We are working to ensure that the providers who have delivered this programme are given as much support as possible in moving forward following the end of these contracts. We recognise that providers have some very positive experience to share, and it is important to us that we create the best possible opportunity both to learn from this experience, and to put providers in touch with other potential funding sources, for example we have given presentations at the City Strategy learning network on the benefits of outreach.

The programme has clearly demonstrated some of the benefits that outreach activity can provide to hard to reach individuals. The approach for moving forward is consistent with the DWP strategy for worklessness support through Local Strategic Partnerships (LSP's). There is flexibility through LSP's to shape the content of local provision.

## **Conclusion**

The initial Equality Impact screening concluded that the POEM programme of pilots would cause minimal impact on staff other than a slight increase in workload, in relation to existing processes (i.e. third party provision managers, and DWP procurement).<sup>13</sup>

The POEM programme of outreach pilots aimed to help ethnic minorities and women get closer to the labour market. It has succeeded in its aim without discrimination or any identifiable disadvantage to clients and providers in terms of race, gender, age sexual orientation, disability, religion and belief.

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<sup>13</sup> Initial Equality Impact screening Ethnic Minorities Employment Partnerships Division, National Tier March 2007

The needs of disabled people under the Disability Equality Duty were taken into consideration at design and implementation stage, including access to buildings, streets and transport, written information and communication (visual and hearing impairment), reasonable adjustments, Health and Safety procedures, Mental Health; and other long-term illness and health conditions.

There has been increased understanding of particular barriers to employment for non-working partners of low-income families, based in areas of disadvantage and high ethnic minority population.

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## ANNEX 1 - PERFORMANCE BY REGION

Region	Starts	% of expected starts	Job starts	% of expected job Outcomes
East Midlands	293	75%	68	49%
London	6336	79%	1390	59%
North West	620	83%	221	93%
West Midlands	979	66%	536	120%
York& Humber	502	82%	149	110%

## PERFORMANCE BY DISTRICT

District	Starts	% of expected starts	Job starts	% of expected job starts
Leicester and Northants	293	75%	68	49%
Central London	198	28%	8	4%
City and East	1371	70%	296	51%
North and North East London	1419	91%	367	70%
South and South East London	763	89%	101	41%
West London	1575	76%	413	81%
Manchester	620	83%	221	93%
Birmingham	979	66%	536	120%
West Yorkshire	502	82%	149	110%

## PERFORMANCE BY AGE, GENDER AND ETHNICITY

Group	Characteristics	Starts	Job starts	Other	No reason
<b>Age</b>	17 or Under	103	22	4	0
	18-24	2808	845	154	117
	25-34	3027	799	202	181
	35-49	2256	574	134	110
	50 or over	533	124	45	25
<b>Age Total</b>		<b>8727</b>	<b>2364</b>	<b>539</b>	<b>433</b>
<b>Ethnicity</b>	01 White British	280	56	12	20
	02 White Irish	39	11	0	4
	03 Other White	849	205	52	66
	04 White & Black Caribbean	48	14	1	0
	05 White & Black African	59	8	4	1
	06 White & Asian	17	7	0	1
	07 Other Mixed	67	22	2	2
	08 Indian	730	173	62	48
	09 Pakistani	1301	373	110	67
	10 Bangladeshi	1271	380	76	63
	11 Other Asian	419	72	32	7
	12 Black Caribbean	373	123	14	20
	13 Black African	2867	822	156	62
	14 Other Black	194	51	2	12
	15 Chinese	36	9	2	4
	16 Other Ethnic Group	178	37	15	6
<b>Ethnicity Total</b>		<b>8728</b>	<b>2363</b>	<b>540</b>	<b>433</b>
<b>Gender</b>	Female	4828	1144	366	278
	Male	3896	1219	173	155
<b>Gender Total</b>		<b>8724</b>	<b>2363</b>	<b>539</b>	<b>433</b>

\* Note: slight inconsistency in the data due to provider reporting