



**EAST SUSSEX ADDITIONAL
SUPPORT PROGRAMME**

**DRAFT REPORT
FOR EAST SUSSEX CHANGE UP**

**Sompriti
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EAST SUSSEX ADDITIONAL SUPPORT PROGRAMME

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. INTRODUCTION

The East Sussex Additional Support Programme (ASP) is one of the projects commissioned by GOSE and connected to the East Sussex ChangeUp Executive to inform the East Sussex Infrastructure Development Plan. A key task for the ASP is to engage a wide range of BME groups as well as faith, refugees and asylum seekers and Traveller and Gypsy groups and identify their infrastructure and support needs.

This summary presents the main priorities of the four types of community and an outline action plan for taking this work forward.

2. SCOPE

The ASP should be considered as work in progress. It had a later start than other ChangeUp activity and the strands in this area are diverse, less organised and at a much earlier developmental stage as a whole. In particular it has not been possible to consider the specific needs of refugees and asylum seekers and it is planned to explore these further between April and June.

For a considerable number of individuals and members of BME and other groups a key priority is having basic needs met, such as accommodation and language classes and being able to access public services. Much of the support provided for these communities is by individuals, families and very small groups largely operating from people's homes. If only infrastructure for existing organisations was considered, currently larger and more pressing needs would be missed.

The scope for this work has therefore been to consider what communities would like to see from public services in the next ten years, the role that VCOS could play in this and the support, including infrastructure support that would be required to achieve this vision.

3. CONTEXT

The 2001 census recorded over almost 27,000 BME people¹ in East Sussex, over 360,000 people with Christian beliefs in East Sussex and almost 9,000 from other faiths. Gypsies and Travellers are recognised as distinct ethnic groups under race relations legislation, but are not included in the census or routine ethnic monitoring. The county has four permanent sites, one transit site and a few privately owned Gypsy and Traveller sites. Many Gypsies and Travellers also live in social and private housing throughout the county. A conservative estimate of the number of Gypsies and Travellers in East Sussex is around 2000 people.

The number of Home Office supported asylum seekers in East Sussex is just under 200, and Migrant Helpline estimate about 200 people with refugee status in East Sussex.

¹ BME is defined here as including white Irish, white other and non-white

4. PRIORITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

BME communities

Priorities for support for BME VCOs and communities can be considered under three areas:

- Community engagement/development/community cohesion activities
- Voice/representation
- Delivery of services

Each of these areas is described in more detail below.

BME community engagement/ development:

All BME/ faith based VCOs in East Sussex play an important role in engaging BME people and will continue to do so. It is also important to identify and support new and emerging communities and groups such as migrant workers. Underpinning the engagement process is community development: continued engagement sustained through ongoing outreach, and through which trust and confidence is developed, communities empowered and isolation reduced, especially for the most vulnerable and isolated members of the BME community. By bringing communities together and facilitating community cohesion a sense of community is fostered and confidence to access public services increased. Thus strengthening and proper resourcing of community development work is required in order to fully engage people from all BME communities.

Further exploration of community development needs is required, including a possible audit of existing support and developing a resource plan.

Voice/Representation:

Many recognise the importance of a BME specific role in shaping public services, both to confidently respond to the agenda of public services and to have a voice in shaping the agenda so that needs and requirements of all sections of the community are met.

A BME VCO consortium could be an effective interface between public service providers and BME people and communities. This BME consortium could both be a good first point of contact for public authorities and be an effective method for BME people and VCOs to help shape public services to better meet the needs of the whole community. It could minimise consultation fatigue and ensure that BME feedback is structured, while ensuring an appropriate response and outcomes from public authorities. All VCOs thought it important for BME/Faith groups to work together and the vast majority of groups were interested to be involved in progressing this.

In Hastings and Eastbourne there are already two local BME networks developing and it is important they are effectively involved in any process of forming a BME consortium. The BME representation function at a local and county level needs further discussion.

Delivery of services:

In terms of delivery of services the main role of the BME/ faith VCO sector is providing information about and facilitating access to public services. Many VCOs interviewed expressed a need for better access to information about local public services with an emphasis on health, education, housing and also English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), employment and immigration.

In order for community groups to meet the requests of their members there is a need for community groups to have better access to information on public authorities, the services they provide and other local services. Very few of the groups already work with public authorities or deliver specific services to the members of their communities. However, since many groups face requests at some point from their members regarding public services there is a need for developing pathways or help that can assist with this.

Actions to support this could include developing:

- Tailor made information/ Training on specific areas for BME / faith based VCOs to enable groups to inform their members about local services e.g. health, housing, immigration
- Referral pathways - e.g. direct to the public service or to an organisation such as Sompriti which is established in information/ access provision, has links with local services and already receives referrals from community groups and individuals.
- Advocacy/ access pathways
- Reporting and addressing racism

These fall within the 'starting new groups/signposting and information' function of infrastructure support.

Another priority is to support the development of new services for the BME community, e.g. for elders children/young people, families support and mental health support. Such support is linked to the function 'starting new groups and services'

Other infrastructure support needs are considered further below, linked to the infrastructure functions agreed by the East Sussex ChangeUp Executive:

- Training and technical help - organisational development, book keeping, IT, governance were identified
- Accommodation and physical resources - including offices or space for meetings/ activities. Some interest in BME specific space
- Enabling and supporting volunteers – not a high priority as many volunteers come from within the membership of the organisations
- Starting new groups and services - this could include community development support and supporting the development of new services, e.g. specific services for elderly, children and young people (see above)
- Funding advice and support -this is an important area for support. A number of groups highlighted the potential divisor of competing for funds especially as the work developed over the coming years. To avoid this and aid a more collaborative approach many could see the benefit of working jointly to prioritise work and agreeing funding for instance through the proposed BME Consortium.

In the IDP it will be useful to include developing a framework for increasing understanding of the role of BME/faith based VCOs – this links to the strategic aim 'to raise the profile of VCOs and their contribution to the community. This may include training, provided by the BME/faith

based VCO sector for LIOs and public authorities, as well as other front line VCOs , to raise knowledge levels about the value and contribution of the BME and under-represented sector and BME issues, to ensure an appropriate response to community need.

In addition in line with the East Sussex Compact and its Code of Practice on Black and Minority Ethnic Groups, it is important to emphasise the important role of BME groups in bringing a distinctive value to society, enabling BME individuals to contribute to public life and in supporting the creation of a more cohesive and inclusive society.

Faith communities

One clear need is for all faith communities to be treated as potential partners in the delivery of public services, by statutory agencies and other voluntary and community sector groups.

There are barriers that have developed over time which need to be dismantled. These include the tradition of putting faith groups in the same category as political parties when it comes to funding criteria. This has disadvantaged faith communities when applying for public funds, and yet ignores the indications that money invested in the social provision provided by faith communities can often go further because of the existing infrastructure of such communities and the high commitment to the volunteering ethos by such groups.

Because many of the trusts and companies that help fund the voluntary sector are unwilling to fund the faith sector, along with the view amongst many faith groups that the lottery is an evil to be avoided, there is a greater need for public funding targeted at faith groups.

A commitment by public bodies to ensure that funding for the support of faith bodies is used to build internal capacity and not simply handed to generalist voluntary sector infrastructure bodies to work with faith groups. This means treating faith infrastructure provision in the same way as BME infrastructure provision.

In summary, addressing current funding criteria and barriers to accessing funding is a key priority for faith groups in terms of developing their work.

Traveller and Gypsy communities

It is recommended that the feasibility of the establishment of a Gypsy and Traveller-led voluntary organisation be explored. This could deliver services to the Gypsy and Traveller community either covering just East Sussex or a larger region depending on the conclusions of the Change Up Additional Support Programme work in other counties in the South East.

Good quality public services, particularly accommodation which then enables access to other services continues to be a key priority.

Refugee and asylum seekers

A short term priority is to further explore the specific needs of refugee and asylum seekers.

It is expected that information, advocacy and support will be priorities, in the areas of immigration, housing and addressing racism.

5. ACTION PLAN

Strategic Aim	Objectives/actions
<p>To achieve a sustainable base level of infrastructure support to VCOs</p>	<p>Technical advice and training (inc ICT) and development to support emerging need Including organisational development, book-keeping, ICT for BME VCOs</p> <p>Funding advice and support and development to support emerging needs Including a collaborative approach for BME VCOs</p> <p>Recruiting and developing volunteers</p> <p>Starting new groups and services Support for the development of new services for the BME community, e.g. for elders, children/young people</p> <p>Sign posting and general information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tailor made information/training on specific areas, e.g. health, housing for BME communities • Referral pathways – direct to public service or through intermediary for BME communities • Reporting/addressing racism <p>Physical facilities and resources</p> <p>Access to appropriate physical space for activities, office for BME / faith based groups</p> <p>Further exploration of BME community development needs, including a possible audit of existing support and developing a resource plan</p> <p>Explore the feasibility of the establishment of a Gypsy and Traveller-led voluntary organisation – providing services and ‘voice’</p> <p>Further explore the specific support needs of refugee and asylum seekers</p>
<p>To raise quality standards and good management practice amongst VCOs</p>	<p>Governance support</p>
<p>To raise the profile of VCO’s contribution to the community</p>	<p>Increase understanding of role of BME/faith based VCOs, including training to raise knowledge of the value and contribution of the BME and under-represented sector and of BME issues, to ensure an appropriate response to community need.</p>
<p>To provide a ‘voice’ for VCOs and opportunities for wider community engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish BME Consortium ▪ Advocacy work with public bodies to ensure that funding for the support of faith bodies is used to build internal capacity ▪ Advocacy work to address current funding criteria and barriers to accessing funding (for faith groups) ▪ Explore the feasibility of the establishment of a Gypsy and Traveller-led voluntary organisation – providing services and ‘voice’

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ABBREVIATIONS

BME	Black and Minority Ethnic
CVS	Council for Voluntary Service
GOSE	Government Office for the South East
ICT	Information Communication Technology
Infrastructure organisations	Organisations which exist to provide support to other voluntary and community organisations, for example Council for Voluntary Service
IDP	Infrastructure Development Plan
LIO	Local infrastructure organisations
VCS	Voluntary and Community Sector
VCOs	Voluntary and Community Organisations
VDA	Volunteer Development Agency

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The East Sussex Additional Support Programme (ASP) is one of the projects commissioned by the East Sussex ChangeUp Executive to inform the East Sussex Infrastructure Development Plan. A key task for the ASP is to engage a wide range of BME groups as well as faith, refugees and asylum seekers and Traveller and Gypsy community organisations and identify their infrastructure and support needs.
- 1.2 An ultimate aim of ChangeUp is to strengthen the ability of frontline VCOs to undertake their work, in particular in relation to contributing to ensuring good public services for all sections of the community. It is acknowledged that front line organisations help or have the potential to help deliver public services in unique ways and are also the foundation of community engagement. A key focus of ChangeUp is developing infrastructure services supporting frontline organisations.
- 1.3 The East Sussex ASP work is supported by a strong steering group with perspectives provided for all four ASP strands: BME groups, faith groups, Traveller and Gypsy people and asylum seekers and refugees. In addition there is representation from Government Office for the South East and East Sussex County Council. This plan is the amalgamation of four separate strands of work.
- 1.4 The ASP should be considered as work in progress. It had a later start than other ChangeUp activity and the strands in this area are diverse, less organised and at a much earlier developmental stage as a whole. In particular it has not been possible to explore in detail the specific needs of refugees and asylum seekers and it is planned to conduct further research in this area between April and June.
- 1.5 The realities of progressing the ASP strands have meant that there has been little opportunity to date to engage with the wider VCO sector. The consultation phase (April-June 06) will be essential in gaining more specific feedback from ASP groups to help develop an actual plan working towards identifying priorities, timescales and responsible bodies. Also for specific discussions with generalist local infrastructure organisations (LIOs) and an assessment of their needs in delivering infrastructure services to the BME sector.
- 1.6 This work builds on the agreed commitments to promote better understanding and awareness of the diversity, independence and contribution of the BME VCO sector, as highlighted in the East Sussex Compact and its BME Code of Practice on BME groups. The Code also demonstrates a shared commitment by public authorities and the VCO sector to help develop the capacity and infrastructure of the BME voluntary and community groups.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The 2001 census gives the proportion of BME people in East Sussex as follows:

District/Borough	Proportion of BME people*	Number
Eastbourne	7.5%	6,751
Hastings	5.9%	5,025
Lewes	4.8%	4,461
Rother	4.6%	3,942
Wealden	4.7%	6,618

*BME is defined here as including white Irish, white other and non-white

- 2.2 The BME and faith based VCO sector is, in comparison with the mainstream VCO sector, smaller and at an earlier developmental stage in East Sussex, as is the case in most of the South East region, especially semi-rural areas.
- 2.3 The 2001 census also collected information on aspects of religious life and figures for East Sussex are reproduced below:

	East Sussex		Sussex wide	England and Wales
Religion	No's	Percentage	Percentage	Percentage
Christian	362420	73.6%	71.6%	71.7%
No religion	81185	16.49%	17.8%	14.8%
Religion not stated	40012	8.1%	7.8%	7.7%
Muslim	2984	0.6%	0.9%	3%
Other	2457	0.5%	0.5%	0.3%
Buddhist	1289	0.26%	0.32%	0.3%
Jewish	1021	0.2%	0.39%	0.5%
Hindu	807	0.16%	0.45%	1.1%
Sikh	149	0.03%	0.09%	0.6%

- 2.4 The population of East Sussex reflects certain aspects of the national profile, but there are significantly smaller communities of three of the “minority” faiths (Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs) identified in the census when compared to the average size across the country as a whole and the Jewish community is half the size of the average.
- 2.5 There is obviously an overlap when considering the needs of both BME and faith communities. There are faith communities where BME people predominate (e.g. Muslim faith) and there are mainstream churches where there are a significant number of people from minority ethnic groups.
- 2.6 The county is home to around 35 public Gypsy sites and many private Gypsy and Traveller sites. Many Gypsies and Travellers also live in social and private housing throughout the county. Gypsies and

Travellers are a statistically invisible ethnic minority, recognised as distinct ethnic groups under race relations legislation and case law, but are not included in the census or routine ethnic monitoring. A conservative estimate of the number of Gypsy and Traveller people in East Sussex is around 2000 .

- 2.7 The community is diverse, consisting of separate ethnic groups, such as Irish Travellers and English Romani Gypsies. In reality, it is not one community but a range of communities, with differing cultures and aspirations and there is sometimes considerable conflict between groups
- 2.8 There are very few voluntary or community groups representing the communities' interests at a national, regional or local level. As a result it is often excluded from policymaking and most consultation work. It is also self-segregating and highly self-reliant, which helps to re-enforce its isolation from geographical communities that live alongside it. Not surprisingly, this segregation and isolation also extends to its relationship with the voluntary sector.
- 2.9 The number of Home Office supported asylum seekers in East Sussex is just under 200, and Migrant Helpline estimate about 200 people with refugee status in East Sussex. Although numbers are relatively small, these individuals are often in greatest need.
- 2.10 As with faith communities, there is an overlap between BME and refugee communities. There is no specific asylum seeker and refugee group in East Sussex however several of the BME VCOs, especially among the Hastings based VCOs, have a high proportion of members who are asylum seekers or refugees.

3. AIM OF THE PLAN

3.1 The East Sussex ChangeUp Executive's aim is for a strong, vibrant and diverse voluntary and community sector (VCS), with good support giving VCOs:

- the knowledge, skills and resources to run and develop their activities
- the capacity to network and collaborate
- the scope to reflect and promote diversity and equality, and
- the voice to influence strategic policies and programmes.

3.2 The ASP plan aims to identify the support and advice needs of BME and faith groups and communities, refugees and asylum seekers and Traveller and Gypsy groups. The development of this plan is work in progress and will be further progressed during the consultation period from April 2006. The plan aims to:

- consider the role of VCOs in delivering public services and supporting community cohesion and participation– both currently and the potential for development over next 10 years
- establish the needs of current groups for local infrastructure services
- establish emerging needs, where no groups exist at present (e.g. in the Traveller and Gypsy community)

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1 This section describes the methodology for each strand of work. More details for each strand can be found in the individual reports in the Appendices.

BME and faith based VCOs and communities

4.2 Sompriti worked with 22 BME and faith based VCOs, of which 11 are faith based, 1 is a network of individuals and VCOs, and another a network of VCOs and 9 are organised based on common identity, e.g. ethnicity / language. As BME people are spread widely across the county and the majority do not belong to an organised group, it was felt important to engage individuals in the process and 136 individuals were involved.

4.3 Information was gathered through:

- surveys including face to face meetings
- preparing discussion documents
- meetings to review and develop the documents.
- November BME and faith based event in Hastings

Faith VCOs and communities

4.4 The foundation for the faith based work was the information available from the census and that provided by the various Christian Churches in Sussex. Each Church produces statistics which are published in various ways, locally, regionally and locally. This data was gathered as desk based research. To this was added information gathered from a number of meetings and interviews carried out by the Mission and Unity Co-ordinator for Churches Together in Sussex from his appointment in May 2001. This post is funded by the seven largest Christian structures in Sussex to work with all Churches and Non Christian faith groups. The findings are based on the outcomes from these meetings and interviews.

Traveller and Gypsy community

4.5. As there is no East Sussex based Traveller and Gypsy led organisation interviews were conducted with 25 individuals from the Traveller and Gypsy community. There was also a community event held in Wealden at the end of January where people had a chance to meet and further discuss some of the issues raised in the survey.

4.6. In addition, Friends, Family and Travellers, a national Traveller and Gypsy advocacy organisation based in Brighton, and Sussex Traveller Action Group, a small direct action group with members from across Sussex, were engaged through the ASP process.

Refugee and asylum seekers

- 4.7 There is no specific asylum seeker and refugee group in East Sussex however several of the BME VCOs, especially among the Hastings based VCOs, have a high proportion of members who are either asylum seekers or refugees. Views of Migrant Helpline were sought who have an East Sussex base in Hastings and are the key support agency in East Sussex working with this group.

5. BME AND FAITH BASED COMMUNITIES

5.1 CONTEXT AND NEEDS

- 5.1.1 Again, the information presented here is a summary, with full details available in Appendix 1.
- 5.1.2 For a considerable number of individuals and members of BME groups a key priority is having basic needs met, such as accommodation and language classes and being able to access public services. This was strongly echoed at the regional ASP event in February 2006, where ASP projects from across the South East highlighted that their work was having to become a lot broader than the original Change Up focus on infrastructure for organisations.
- 5.1.3 Much of the support provided for these communities is with individuals, families and very small groups largely operating from people's homes. If only infrastructure for organisations was considered, currently larger and more pressing needs would be missed.
- 5.1.4 From the East Sussex research it is clear that access to public services was a priority for members of the BME community, including appropriate health care provision, bilingual support to help BME people access public services. Specific priorities also include:
- Accessible, appropriate and affordable English classes to enable better access in the longer term.
 - Improving education and employment opportunities for BME people.
 - Addressing racism and community safety
- 5.1.5 Where BME VCOs exist, many see their main aims as:
- Supporting community cohesion and community development, e.g. providing opportunities for members in their communities to meet and socialise
 - Representing the views of their communities
 - Delivery of services, through providing informal support, information and advocacy support to the community.
- 5.1.6 A few VCOs are currently helping public services providers to deliver public services such as health promotion work and disseminating information about public services to their community members.
- 5.1.7 Themes for future work include developing more specific activities for elders, young people and women in their communities and put on more celebrations and social events.
- 5.1.8 There is also interest in helping public services providers to deliver services in the future.
- Several VCOs can imagine becoming a better public service resource such as being a first point of contact for service providers, information resource and broker relations between

public authorities and BME and faith communities.

- Several VCOs want access to more information about public services to be able to inform their members better.
- Several VCOs would like to deliver services for specific groups, such as elders, children and young people.

5.1.9 Key priorities arising for infrastructure support for these activities are:

- Access to funding and/or help with fundraising
- Access to appropriate physical space for activities, office and worship.
- Access to information and training (training needs that were highlighted were around organisational development, governance, bookkeeping and IT).

5.1.9 Other infrastructure priorities are access to administrative support, volunteers and help with publicity and equipment.

5.2 CURRENT PROVISION

5.2.1 Sources of support for BME VCOs and communities include:

- Generalist LIOs, including Councils for Voluntary Service (CVS) in particular Hastings Voluntary Action (the CVS in Hastings) who run the Hastings BME Project and Eastbourne Association of Voluntary service (the CVS in Eastbourne)
- Hastings Trust
- Migrant Helpline
- Sompriti

5.2.2 The research showed that just over a quarter of VCOs currently receive, or have received previously, some infrastructure support. All of the VCOs access support locally. BME VCOs have had some form of support from Hastings Voluntary Action (3 groups), Eastbourne Association of Voluntary Services (4), Hastings Trust (2).

5.2.3 Hastings Voluntary Action (HVA) supports partnership working to address the needs of BME communities in relation to a range of local policy, planning and practice issues. This includes the production of Hastings BME News and other activities to promote race equality and community cohesion. In addition BME groups have access to a range of HVA support services such as one to one advice and training.

5.2.4 Eastbourne Association of Voluntary service (EAVS) works with any voluntary and community group in Eastbourne that requires assistance to get started, develop projects and obtain funding. We provide information, advice and outreach support and run a programme of training for voluntary and community groups. In line with EAVES overall aims, they have supported several local BME community groups, in accessing support in the above areas and in signposting them to other

services and opportunities. EAVES have also worked with representatives from a number of BME communities to support the development of the Eastbourne Cultural Communities Network (ECCN) and to employ a community representative to support the group. EAVES no longer formally support ECCN, but continue to provide information, advice and guidance as and when requested.

- 5.2.5 Hastings Trust, a registered charity aims to create active partnerships between the public, private, voluntary and community sectors and to enable them to work together for the economic, environmental and social regeneration of Hastings.
- 5.2.6 Migrant Helpline specifically provides support to asylum seekers and refugees. Migrant Helpline aims to support and advice asylum seekers that live in Hastings, most of whom are living in council provided accommodation. They also cover Rother, Eastbourne and Lewes. Migrant Helpline offers a drop in and by appointment service. They have a deep understanding of how the immigration service works and help with basic advice. In case of specific requirements they refer to appropriate service providers.
- 5.2.7 Sompriti is a county-wide BME community organisation with core activities being community development, joint working with local agencies to advance race equality and address racism and partnership work with BME individuals and groups to meet aspirations and build capacity. It's community work especially in semi-rural areas is recognised nationally and is progressed through a team of multi-lingual community workers who between them offer 10 community languages and also support people to access information and local services. Through community work new groups supported range from BME Elder's Forum and BME business network and diverse tailor made initiatives have been developed to enable BME people to be involved in informing policy and local service delivery.

5.3 FUTURE PRIORITIES

- 5.3.1 Key priorities for BME communities are:
- Access to public and local services
 - Strengthening BME VCOs and BME voice/representation
 - Access to information and advocacy
 - Addressing isolation/community cohesion
- 5.3.2 Priorities for support can be considered under three areas:
- Community engagement/development/community cohesion activities
 - Voice/representation
 - Delivery of services

Each of these areas is described in more detail below.

Community engagement/ development:

5.3.3 All BME/ faith based VCOs in East Sussex play an important role in engaging BME people and will continue to do so. It is also important to identify and support new and emerging communities and groups such as migrant workers. Underpinning the engagement process is community development: continued engagement sustained through ongoing outreach, and through which trust and confidence is developed, communities empowered and isolation reduced, especially for the most vulnerable and isolated members of the BME community. By bringing communities together and facilitating community cohesion a sense of community is fostered and confidence to access public services increased. Thus strengthening and proper resourcing of community development work is required in order to fully engage people from all BME communities.

5.3.4 Further exploration of community development needs is required, including a possible audit of existing support and developing a resource plan.

Voice/Representation:

5.3.5 Many recognise the importance of a BME specific role in shaping public services, both to confidently respond to the agenda of public services and to have a voice in shaping the agenda so that needs and requirements of all sections of the community are met. This could take many forms, including:

- Consultation/ involvement work with particular groups such as BME elders or families with young children to inform specific public service agendas or to highlight the specific service needs of that group.
- Consultation with the membership of a particular BME VCO
- Feedback of needs and requirements to public service providers on an ongoing basis, from BME VCOs and individuals who have particular needs

5.3.6 A BME VCO consortium could be an effective interface between public service providers and BME people and communities. This BME consortium could both be a good first point of contact for public authorities and be an effective method for BME people and VCOs to help shape public services to better meet the needs of the whole community. It could minimise consultation fatigue and ensure that BME feedback is structured, while ensuring an appropriate response and outcomes from public authorities. All VCOs thought it important for BME/Faith groups to work together and the vast majority of groups were interested to be involved in progressing this.

5.3.7 In Hastings and Eastbourne there are already two local BME networks developing and it is important they are effectively involved in any process of forming a BME consortium. The BME representation function at a local and county level needs further discussion.

5.3.8 The role of a possible BME Consortium is discussed further below.

Delivery of services:

5.3.9 In terms of delivery of services the main role of the BME/ faith VCO sector is providing information about and facilitating access to public services. Many VCOs interviewed expressed a need for better access to information about local public services with an emphasis on health, education, housing and also English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), employment and immigration.

5.3.10 In order for community groups to meet the requests of their members there is a need for community groups to have better access to information on public authorities, the services they provide and other local services. Very few of the groups already work with public authorities or deliver specific services to the members of their communities. However, since many groups face requests at some point other from their members regarding public services there is a need for developing pathways or help that can assist with this.

5.3.11 Actions to support this could include developing:

- Tailor made information/ Training on specific areas e.g. health, housing, immigration
- Referral pathways - e.g. direct to the public service or to an organisation such as Sompriti which is established in information/ access provision, has links with local services and already receives referrals from community groups and individuals.
- Advocacy/ access pathways
- Reporting and addressing racism

These fall within the 'starting new groups/signposting and information' function of infrastructure support.

5.3.12 A priority is to support for the development of new services in partnership with the BME/ faith based VCO sector for the BME community, e.g. for elders, children/young people. Such support is linked to the function 'starting new groups and services'.

5.3.13 Other infrastructure support needs are considered further below, linked to the infrastructure functions agreed by the East Sussex ChangeUp Consortium:

- Training and technical help - organisational development, book keeping, IT, governance were identified

- Accommodation and physical resources - including offices or space for meetings/ activities. Some interest in BME specific space
- Enabling and supporting volunteers – not a high priority as many volunteers come from within the membership of the organisations
- Starting new groups and services - this could include community development support and supporting the development of new services, e.g. specific services for elderly and children (see above)
- Funding advice and support -this is an important area for support. A number of groups highlighted the potential divisor of competing for funds especially as the work developed over the coming years. To avoid this and aid a more collaborative approach many could see the benefit of working jointly to prioritise work and agreeing funding for instance through the proposed BME Consortium.

5.3.14 In the IDP it will be useful to include developing a framework for increasing understanding of the role of BME/faith based VCOs – this links to the strategic aim:

‘To raise the profile of VCOs and their contribution to the community.’

This may include training for LIOs and public authorities, by the BME/ faith based sector to raise knowledge levels about the value and contribution of the BME and under-represented sector and BME issues, to ensure an appropriate response to community need.

5.4 DELIVERY OF SUPPORT

- 5.4.1 A three strand approach is recommended to meet the seven core infrastructure services for BME/ faith based VCOs. One strand relates to infrastructure services that can be met, and in some cases are already being met by generalist LIOs. The second relates to infrastructure services which can potentially best be met through BME infrastructure work. Thirdly infrastructure services that can be met by a combination of generalist and BME specific infrastructure services.
- 5.4.2 The table overleaf summarise the areas of support and proposed lead – either generalist, BME led or a joint approach.
- 5.4.3 Where it is proposed that support is provided by generalist infrastructure, it is proposed that BME organisations liaise with volunteer development agencies and generalist LIOs on support to BME/ faith based VCOS. Similarly, in areas which are proposed as BME led, including representation, it will be important to develop good dialogue and collaborative links with the wider VCO sector and public service sector.
- 5.4.4 There may be some future additional work to engage other voluntary sector bodies in the wider VCS sector who are accessed by the under-represented communities and to identify gaps in provision of public services.

Table 1: Support priorities for BME VCOs/communities

Strategic aim	Support function	Specific action	Led by
<p>To achieve a sustainable base level of support to VCOs and communities to enable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community engagement/development and community cohesion activities • Delivery of public services 			
		Further exploration of community development needs, including a possible audit of existing support and developing a resource plan.	BME led
	Technical advice and training	Including organisational development, book-keeping, ICT, governance	Generalist LIOs
	Funding advice	Including collaborative approach	Joint approach
	Accommodation and physical resources	Access to appropriate physical space for activities, office	Generalist LIOS
	Recruiting and developing volunteers		Generalist/VDAs
	Starting new groups and services	Support for the development of new services for the BME community, e.g. for elders, children/young people	Joint approach
	Signposting and general information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tailor made information/training on specific areas, e.g. health, housing • Referral pathways – direct to public services or through intermediary • Reporting/addressing racism 	BME led

Strategic aim	Support function	Specific action	Led by
To provide a 'voice' for VCOs and communities and opportunities for wider community engagement	Voice and representation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish BME Consortium 	BME led
To raise the profile of VCOs and their contribution to the community.		Increase understanding of role of BME/faith based VCOs, including training to raise knowledge of the value and contribution of the BME and under-represented sector and of BME issues, to ensure an appropriate response to community need.	BME led

5.5 ROLE OF A BME CONSORTIUM

5.5.1 As discussed above, it is proposed that a BME Consortium is established in East Sussex, with the potential following roles:

- Representing views of BME organisations and communities
- Ensuring a focus on meeting the basic needs of BME people
- Providing a collaborative and co-ordinated approach, and reducing potential for duplication
- Identifying specific areas for joint delivery work by the BME/ faith based VCO sector and liaison with local public services
- Brokering relationships with the wider VCO sector and public agencies
- Reviewing and developing the IDP
- Influencing, strengthening and informing about racist incident work

5.5.2 The BME consortium can play an important role in the future shaping of public services by facilitating a joint countywide approach to influence and inform public service providers, and the VCO sector about the requirements and aspirations of BME communities.

5.5.3 There are currently LIOs providing infrastructure support to BME VCOs and a whole range of BME VCO activities that do not relate to public services in terms of either engagement, voice/representation or helping to deliver public services. A BME consortium can help develop a plan to ensure basic needs of the whole community is met. Also it is recognised that there are many BME individuals who are not part of any VCO or network and it is important that space is made for their for their views.

5.5.4 Currently there is little BME VCO duplication of work and activities. However in East Sussex, if collaborative and coordinating mechanisms are not set up amongst the BME/ faith based sector there is the future potential for duplication, not building on work and competition. There is a role for a BME consortium to help manage this.

5.5.5 The BME consortium can identify funding opportunities relating to the engaging, shaping and delivering of public services. Members of the consortium can collaborate to identify which VCO is in the best position to deliver, and agree on a supportive approach to take in terms of funding that work .

5.5.6 The proposed BME consortium may be able to identify specific areas for delivery work and liaise with public services to progress this. Through an inclusive engagement and shaping process, an ongoing plan for effective delivery can be progressed. It is essential to remember that positive shaping and delivery of public services is underpinned by an effective engagement process.

5.5.7 A BME consortium would help to broker the relationship between various BME and faith based VCOs in East Sussex. As the consortium develops VCOs can collectively identify priorities and decide together how best to

meet them, from within the BME VCO sector or working together with the wider VCO sector and public agencies. A consortium will enable building collaborative working relations towards developing a representative plan.

- 5.5.8 The role of the BME consortium would be to continue to develop the East Sussex ASP IDP plan, collectively agree to it, identify priorities and annually review it in the light of changing requirements and demographics of BME people in East Sussex and new and emerging communities.
- 5.5.9 One of the first tasks of the BME consortium will be to audit the skills and expertise of each BME and faith based VCO in East Sussex in order to better understand their strengths and identify needs and gaps.
- 5.5.10 Additionally, the BME consortium can play an important role in influencing, strengthening and informing about racist incident work in East Sussex.

6. FAITH COMMUNITIES

6.1 Needs and context

- 6.1.1 A more detailed report is given in Appendix 2.
- 6.1.2 Faith communities in East Sussex provide many services that would otherwise need to be provided by statutory agencies or other voluntary sector bodies. These take many forms
- 6.1.3 The neighbourhood lunch clubs, Pre-Schools, or toddlers and carers groups that are provided by many faith communities are too numerous to count as are the many other neighbourhood based services. Some of these facilities are primarily available to those who are members of the faith group, but these are no less important as those who attend do so because they need such services. However the vast majority of these schemes (run either by the faith communities or by others) are provided to meet the needs of the wider community. Many of these services are resourced entirely by the communities or are subsidised by them (such as providing accommodation at no cost, or below market rates).
- 6.1.4 There are many services which are provided by faith communities which are beyond the scope of any one church, synagogue or mosque. Examples include Aquila based in Crowborough but meeting needs across the South East, People Matter in Eastbourne, Hastings and Rother YMCA, Farm Crisis Network and services provided by Chichester Diocese (Church of England) and The Diocese of Arundel and Brighton (Roman Catholic) who each run substantial services including schools in East Sussex. These vary significantly in terms of where they obtain their funding from and how much help they need (or provide) in terms of employment law, funding advice, and specialist skills such as being a Registered Social Landlord.

6.2 Current provision

- 6.2.1 Faith based infrastructure typically follows one of two approaches:
- Infrastructure based on belief or tradition
 - Infrastructure which crossed boundaries and traditions
- 6.2.2 Most of the 385 or so Christian churches in the County relate to one of a range of denominational structures or networks that have International, National and in most cases Regional expressions. Few of these structures are co-terminus with one another but most offer some form of support to enable the local congregations to work in their setting, offering advice and in some cases legal and charitable frameworks that enable workers to be employed and services to be delivered to the local community. The most developed of these are the services offered by the Church of England, and the Roman Catholic Church along with the Methodist, Salvation Army and United Reformed Churches. The main agency which seeks to “join up” this infrastructure is the Churches Together network which operates at all of the levels that the Churches

themselves operate.

- 6.2.3 The non Christian faiths are organised to varying degrees on an International and National basis, however there do not appear to be any which currently work with any form of regional structure. There are no agencies which attempt to “join up” any of the structures across faith boundaries (to do so would risk damaging the individual identity of these communities), but improving relationships between the various faith groups does enable the better resourced to be generous to those with less resources on issues such as responding to crisis or raising concerns on matters of public policy.
- 6.2.4 Some structures such as the Sussex Faith Forum cross boundaries of faith and others remain within the confines of one faith but cross internal boundaries such as Churches Together or the Jewish Representative Council (which is primarily focused on the Synagogues in Brighton & Hove, but has some influence and involvement in the Jewish community in Eastbourne and Hastings). Typically these organisations operate as networks and have little or no resources with which to run buildings or employ people. However they enable the churches and other faith groups to work together more effectively

6.3 Future priorities

- 6.3.1 One clear need is for all faith communities to be treated as potential partners in the delivery of public services, by statutory agencies and other voluntary and community sector groups.
- 6.3.2 There are barriers that have developed over time which need to be dismantled. These include the tradition of putting faith groups in the same category as political parties when it comes to funding criteria. This has disadvantaged faith communities when applying for public funds, and yet ignores the indications that money invested in the social provision provided by faith communities can often go further because of the existing infrastructure of such communities and the high commitment to the volunteering ethos by such groups.
- 6.3.3 Because many of the trusts and companies that help fund the voluntary sector are unwilling to fund the faith sector, along with the view amongst many faith groups that the lottery is an evil to be avoided, there is a greater need for public funding targeted at faith groups.
- 6.3.4 A commitment by public bodies to ensure that funding for the support of faith bodies, is used to build internal capacity and not simply handed to generalist voluntary sector infrastructure bodies to work with faith groups. This means treating faith infrastructure provision in the same way as BME infrastructure provision.
- 6.3.5 In summary, addressing current funding criteria and barriers to accessing funding is a key priority for faith groups in terms of developing their work.

7. TRAVELLER AND GYPSY COMMUNITIES

7.1 Needs

7.1.1 The aim of this research was not to establish the infrastructure needs of Gypsy and Traveller voluntary or community groups as none exist, but rather one aim was to establish whether there is the aspiration and need for the creation of Gypsy and Traveller voluntary groups that can, in time, become connected to the wider voluntary and public sector infrastructure and to establish the community development support that would be needed to support this.

7.1.2 Interviews covered:

- Support and advice
- Self-organising
- Public services
- Making a living

7.1.3 On support and advice, needs expressed including a support and advice centre for travellers, outreach/site support, outreach education. Some wanted specialised services by Travellers for Travellers.

7.1.4 The majority of those interviewed felt that it was important for the community to have a voice in developing local services and decision-making. A majority also expressed a need for the Traveller and Gypsy communities to work together on common issues, accepting cultural differences and developing a strong common voice. Most felt that there was a need for a self-organised Traveller and Gypsy community initiative which was Traveller and Gypsy led.

7.1.5 Responses covering views on public services and making a living are given in Appendix 3 and are largely outside the scope of this plan. Good quality public services, particularly accommodation which then enables access to other services continues to be a key priority.

7.2 Current provision

7.2.1 Friends Families and Travellers (FFT): FFT is a national VCO , based in Brighton that works towards a more equitable society where everyone has the right to travel and to stop without persecution on account of their lifestyle. FFT helps members of the Traveller and Gypsy community to access services and casework provided is often to address discrimination, access to housing and sites, police complaints etc. This service is provided via phone, drop-in and client visits. FFT staff include a full time manager/caseworker, a part-time assistant caseworker, and a part time book-keeper/administrator.

7.2.2 Sussex Traveller Action Group, (STAG): STAG aims to be a debating forum and a direct action group that helps to empower Travellers and Gypsies in Sussex in order to influence local authorities to address the needs of Traveller and Gypsies.

7.2.3 The Gypsy Media Company, based in Hastings is Britain's only media company run by and for Gypsies themselves. Its Director, is the country's only Romany journalist and has been an active member of the East Sussex ASP since its inception. The Gypsy Media Company specialises in communications, research and training projects about Britain's 300 000 Gypsies and travellers. As communication consultants to the public, private and voluntary sector they combine media and research skills with an insight into their own community.

7.3 Priorities for future

7.3.1 One very real reason why the Gypsy and Traveller community does not access help from VCS infrastructure organisations is there are no Gypsy and Traveller led voluntary and community organisations. There are complex reasons why the Gypsy community does not access help from frontline organisations more than it does. But one factor must be limited knowledge about the existence of those organisations, combined with an enduring suspicion of the gorgia (non-Gypsy) community and a perception that many gorgia's would not ever want to help a Gypsy or a Traveller. Another factor is that Gypsy and Traveller needs are often so specific and particular to their own situation that many frontline organisations do not have the knowledge or experience to be of much help.

7.3.2 Research with community members has demonstrated that there is a real desire to start and contribute to a Gypsy and Traveller-led voluntary organisation. A Gypsy and Traveller-led organisation could be supported by other infrastructure organisations and serve as an interface with other frontline voluntary and statutory organisations to direct Gypsy and Traveller people to other groups within the voluntary sector.

7.3.3 It is recommended that the feasibility of the establishment of a Gypsy and Traveller-led voluntary organisation is explored. This could deliver services to the Gypsy and Traveller community either covering just East Sussex or a larger region depending on the conclusions of the Change Up Additional Support Programme work in other counties in the South East.

7.3.4 Good quality public services, particularly accommodation which then enables access to other services continues to be a key priority.

8. REFUGEE AND ASYLUM SEEKER COMMUNITIES

8.1 Needs and context

- 8.1.1 The specific needs of refugee communities will be researched between April and June 2006, so that they can be reflected in the final IDP.
- 8.1.2 It is expected that there will be some overlap with the needs of the BME community, which comprises both more 'settled' communities and new arrivals.
- 8.1.3 Additional needs include access to good appropriate legal advice. Also, asylum seekers who are dispersed to Hastings are free to move elsewhere once asylum has been granted. This causes difficulty in accessing services or co-ordinating services that are culturally specific.
- 8.1.4 There is an established Kurdish community in Hastings and St Leonards and so Kurdish asylum seekers are more likely to remain in the area than other nationalities if they are granted asylum.

8.2 Current provision

- 8.2.1 Several BME VCOs, especially among the Hastings based VCOs, have a high proportion of members who are either asylum seekers or refugees.
- 8.2.2 In addition, Migrant Helpline specifically provides support to asylum seekers and refugees. Migrant Helpline aims to support and advice asylum seekers that live in Hastings, most of which are living in council provided accommodation. They also cover Rother, Eastbourne and Lewes.
- 8.2.3 Migrant Helpline offers a drop in and by appointment service. They have a deep understanding of how the immigration service works and help with basic advice. In case of specific requirements they refer to appropriate service providers. The most common requests they receive are around: clients needing a referral to a specific service, e.g. legal support, medical care; clients with problems with the support they are already receiving, or who may wish to change their legal support; clients requesting updates on their immigration case or need help with explaining a letter from the solicitor; clients requesting help to access a college and help in contacting relatives.

8.3 Future priorities

- 8.3.1 A short term priority is to further explore the specific needs of refugee and asylum seekers.
- 8.3.2 It is expected that information, advocacy and support will be priorities, in the areas of immigration, housing and addressing racism.

9. ACTION PLAN

- 9.1 Actions for the strands of work have been summarised in Table 2 overleaf. This action plan will be further developed between April and June 2006.
- 9.2 This action plan will be integrated into the East Sussex ChangeUp Consortium IDP.

TABLE 2. ACTION PLAN

Strategic Aim	Objectives/actions
To achieve a sustainable base level of infrastructure support to VCOs	<p>Technical advice and training (inc ICT) and development to support emerging need Including organisational development, book-keeping, ICT, for BME VCOs</p> <p>Funding advice and support and development to support emerging needs Including a collaborative approach for BME VCOs</p> <p>Recruiting and developing volunteers</p> <p>Starting new groups and services Support for the development of new services for the BME community, e.g. for elders, children/young people and carers.</p> <p>Sign posting and general information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tailor made information/training on specific areas, e.g. health, housing for BME communities • Referral pathways – direct to public service or through intermediary for BME communities • Reporting/addressing racism <p>Physical facilities and resources</p> <p>Access to appropriate physical space for activities, office for BME communities</p> <p>Further exploration of BME community development needs, including a possible audit of existing support and developing a resource plan</p> <p>Explore the feasibility of the establishment of a Gypsy and Traveller-led voluntary organisation – providing services and ‘voice’</p> <p>Investigate the specific support needs of refugee and asylum seeker communities</p>
To communicate services and activities clearly	
To raise quality standards and good management practice amongst VCOs	Governance support
To raise the profile of VCO’s contribution to the community	Increase understanding of role of BME/faith based VCOs, including training to raise knowledge of the value and contribution of the BME and under-represented sector and of BME issues, to ensure an appropriate response to community need.
To provide a ‘voice’ for VCOs and opportunities for wider community engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish BME Consortium ▪ Advocacy work with public bodies to ensure that funding for the support of faith bodies is used to build internal capacity ▪ Advocacy work to address current funding criteria and barriers to accessing funding ▪ Explore the feasibility of the establishment of a Gypsy and Traveller-led voluntary organisation

Appendix 1: BME and faith based VCOs and communities

1.1 Background

22 BME and faith based VCOs have been engaged through the ASP process, of which 11 are faith based, 1 is a network of individuals and 1 is a network of individuals and VCOs, and 9 are organised based on common identity e.g. ethnicity, language.

The BME and faith based VCO sector is, in comparison with the mainstream VCO sector, smaller and at an early developmental stage in East Sussex, as is the case in most of the South East region, especially semi-rural areas.

1.2 Methodology

Initially a survey was conducted with BME / faith based VCOs during face-to-face visits. Following the survey a feedback document was produced which begun to draw up common themes of BME/ faith based VCO's activities, needs and aspirations for development as well as visions for a collective voice, access to decision making and longer term priorities for BME people and people of diverse faiths in East Sussex. VCOs were able to comment on this document during a second round of face-to-face meetings.

In mid November representatives from the VCOs came together at the Friend's Meeting House in Hastings to collectively begin to vision for public and local services; the role of the role of the BME/ faith based VCO sector in helping to engage, shape and deliver public services; and ways of working together. A second document was produced summarising the discussions at the November ASP event, also outlining the next steps and suggestions forward. Using this document as a base a third round of discussions took place on a one to one basis with engaged VCOs.

List of VCOs engaged in ASP process:

Names of VCOs	Location/based
Celebrating Cultural Diversity Network / Centre of Creativity	Hastings
Eastbourne Chinese Association	Eastbourne
Eastbourne Cultural Communities Network	Eastbourne
Far Eastern Community	Eastbourne
Greek Orthodox Community	Hastings
Hastings Chinese School	Hastings
Hastings Kurdish Welfare Association	Hastings
Hindu Association	Hastings
Ibrahim Islamic Centre	Hastings
Islamic Association	Hastings
Islamic Cultural Centre	Eastbourne
Islamic Information Centre	Hastings
Jameah Islameah	Wealden
Kids and Muslim Mums	Hastings
Kivu Peace Initiative	Hastings
Muslim Women Association	Eastbourne
Progressive Jewish Congregation	Eastbourne
Seaford Mosque	Lewes District
Shunar Bangla	Eastbourne /Lewes and county

United African	Hastings
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List of more recently engaged VCOs (section one only):

Names of VCOs	Location
Filipino Community Group	Eastbourne
Orthodox Jewish Congregation	Eastbourne

1.3 Findings

The survey conducted with BME and faith based VCOs had three main sections. The first section asks the VCOs about their aims, current activities, vision for their future work and the support they need to reach that vision. The second section asks the BME VCOs about the vision for broader BME work as well as their opinion on a collective voice. The third section surveys partnership working, both between BME and faith based VCOs and between BME and faith based VCOs and public authorities.

The number in parenthesis below indicate the number of respondents giving that answer.

Section one: Aims, activities, future work and support needed

Aim of VCO:

Provide opportunities to meet and socialize (9), Informal information and support to members of their communities (6), Facilitate community cohesion and integration (6), Maintain own community language and culture (6), Providing a place for worship (7), Proactively counter myth and misconceptions of their religion and/or ethnicity (3), Provide activities for their community (3), Provide secular and religious education (1).

- *Many VCOs saw as their main aim to provide opportunities for members in their communities to meet and socialize which is the basis for community cohesion. Another important aim is to provide informal support and information to the community.*

Activities:

Cultural and religious celebrations, events and socials (18), Disseminating information (12), help their members with translation (8), Offer informal advice and advocacy (8), Provide language classes in their own community language (7), Activities for children (6), Exercise, sport and health (7), Adult education and training such as English classes and art classes (6), Provide a religious service (7), Personal advice and support (4), Outings (4), Provide a permanent space for socializing (4), Newsletter (4), Give talks (3), Interfaith networking (3), Website (3), Women's groups (2), Theatre/drama (2), Provide facilities for summer camp (1).

- *The key functions of most groups are to disseminate information to people in the community and to offer informal advice and advocacy help, such as translation. Most groups offer to varying extents cultural and religious celebrations and/ or social events.*

Vision for VCOs future work:

More celebrations and social events (4), Provide physical exercise for their community members (4), More activities for elder in their communities (3), More young people's activities (2), More women's activities (2), Want to attract more members (3), Develop their advice and advocacy service (2), Apply for charity status (2).

- *Themes for future work include to put on more celebrations and social events. Also to develop more specific activities for elders, young people and women in their communities.*

Current or previous funding received from:

Hastings Voluntary Action (1), Eastbourne Association of Voluntary Services (1), Eastbourne Borough Council (2), Hastings Trust (3), Hastings Borough Council (5), Sure start (1), Sompriti (1), Global Grant (1), Scarman Trust (2), small health grant (1).

- *11 VCOs currently receive, or have received previously, some financial support. All amounts have been small.*

Current or previous infrastructure support received from:

Hastings Voluntary Action (3), Eastbourne Association of Voluntary Services (4), Hastings Trust (2).

- *6 VCOs currently receive, or have received previously, some infrastructure support. All of the VCOs access support locally.*

Infrastructure support needed:

Funding and/or help with fundraising (9), Accommodation and space (12), broken into the following areas: need space to meet and run their activities (5), Office space (3), need space of worship to be renovated or enlarged (4), need access to space to worship (2), Information and training (3), broken into the following areas: Training in organisational development and governance (3) Training on bookkeeping and IT (3), Administrative support (2), Volunteers (3), Help with publicity (1), Office equipment (1), sports equipment (1).

Key priorities:

- *Access to funding and/or help with fundraising*
- *Access to appropriate physical space for activities, office and worship.*
- *Access to information and training and the training needs that were highlighted were around organisational development, governance, bookkeeping and IT.*

Other priorities:

- *Access to administrative support, volunteers and help with publicity and equipment.*

Priorities for BME work

Access to public and local services (8), especially highlighted areas were: awareness of rights and entitlements to benefits and services (3), Health care was a priority and especially for women (4), Access to BME organisations and

strengthen BME voice/representation (8), Addressing isolation/community cohesion (6), Access to information and advocacy (6), broken into the following areas: information about public services (4), information about immigration (2), information about employment (2), Spaces for BME people and VCOs (5), Improving education/employment opportunities (3), Addressing racism and community safety (3), Access to bilingual support (2), Access to English language classes (3), Support for community language teaching (3), Practice faith in freedom and interfaith work (2), BME and PA working groups to add BME issues (1).

Key priorities:

- *Access to public and local services*
- *Strengthening BME VCOs and BME voice/representation*
- *Access to information and advocacy*
- *Addressing isolation/community cohesion*

3. Partnership working

A. BME/ faith based VCO partnership working:

- *All VCOs thought it important for BME/Faith groups to work together and the vast majority of groups were interested to be involved in progressing this*

Reasons for this and related issues include: Information about each other's activities and services/network (6), not compete over resources (3), Provide support, skills and resources for each other (3), Establishing common priorities/strategies (3), sharing and dialogue (3), Interfaith working and connection (2). Issues raised: Must have a serious agenda (1), clear goals and objectives (1), appropriate facilities and resources (1)

B. Collective voice and representation

- *All VCOs think there is a role for a collective BME/Faith based voice*

All 20 VCOs identified the need for collective BME voice and representation. Reasons and issues include: Stronger collectively and more influential (8), share learning and exchange (3), Set competition aside (2), need to meet and work out our commonalities. Issues raised: needs clear structures (1), need sufficient resources to be sustained (1), needs strong leadership (2).

At the BME/ faith based VCO event in November a strong theme highlighted was the need for BME views to reach strategic levels and help shape public services in the future.

C. Partnership working between public authorities and BME VCOs:

Want to in the future, or is already currently, help public agencies provide information about public services to community members (5), Already providing health promotion activities (4), Need better information and understanding of immigration legislation (5), Already offering help around employment but would like support in doing so more efficiently (4), Wanted to be a public authority

resource for information and advice (3), Could broker relations between public authorities and the community (3).

- *Some VCOs are currently helping public services providers to deliver public services such as health promotion work and disseminating information about public services to their community members*
- *There is also some interest in helping public services providers to deliver public services in the future.*
 - *Several VCOs can imagine becoming a better public service resource such as being a first point of contact for service providers, information resource and broker relations between public authorities and BME and faith communities.*
 - *Several VCOs want access to more information about public services to be able to inform their members better.*
 - *Need to make better use of skills in the BME community.*

November BME and faith based VCO Event

At the BME and faith based VCO event in November visions for public and local services were further discussed. The discussions took place in smaller workshops for different public sector areas. The emphasis centred on health, social care and education.

For health and social care it was highlighted that BME people need better provision of information and that BME people need better support in accessing health care, including bi-lingual support. There was a discussion around the need for diverse ethnic and faith needs to be respected, which can only come about through greater understanding of these needs by service providers and by changing attitudes. Women specific health provision needs were discussed as well as the specific needs BME elders, such as language support and female health care providers.

In terms of education the groups discussed the need for accessible and appropriate ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) provision in their communities, which would ensure better access to public services in the longer term. Making sure existing skills are valued and utilised and the importance of getting educational qualifications from abroad recognized. Also, it was highlighted that there needs to be higher awareness of diversity issues by educational providers

Much of the discussion around housing needs was linked to community safety.

- *From the VCO surveys and the VCO event it is clear that access to public services was a priority for members of the BME community, appropriate health care provision, bilingual support to help BME people access public services*
- *Accessible, appropriate and affordable English classes to enable better access in the longer term.*
- *Also improving education and employment opportunities for BME people.*
- *Addressing racism and community safety was another area prioritised.*

2. BME individuals

2.1 Background

Census Data 2001

District/Borough	Proportion of BME people*	Number
Eastbourne	7.5%	6,751
Hastings	5.9%	5,025
Lewes	4.8%	4,461
Rother	4.6%	3,942
Wealden	4.7%	6,618

*BME is defined here as including white Irish, white other and non-white

The 2001 census data above puts into context the proportion and number of BME people in each of the 5 districts/boroughs of East Sussex. What it does not reflect however, is the wide geographical spread of BME people in the county. Due to this geographical spread and because most BME people in East Sussex do not belong to an organised group it was felt that it was important to engage individuals in the ASP process as well as VCOs. Therefore, Sompriti's bilingual community workers undertook 136 BME Individual surveys with a diverse range of BME people living across East Sussex.

The demographic breakdown of the 136 respondents is as follows:

Age Range	Number
11 to 20	17
21 to 30	28
31 to 40	38
41 to 50	27
51 to 60	19
61 to 70	6
Gender	Number
Male	44
Female	92

Self-defined Ethnicity	Number
Afghani	2
Albanian	1
Bangladeshi	20
Brazilian	3
Columbian	1
Chinese	33
Egyptian	1
Filipino	1
Indian	5

Iranian	5
Iraqi	1
Japanese	4
Kurdish	8
Madeira Portuguese	8
Malaysian	10
Moroccan	3
Mozambican	1
Portuguese	15
Sudanese	1
Spanish	3
Turkish	4
Venezuelan	4
Zimbabwean	2

2.2 Methodology

Sompriti bilingual community workers completed 136 surveys with a diverse range of BME people across the county. The surveys were conducted face to face in people's own homes, in a venue of their choice, over the phone. (Sompriti to add bi-lingually and add languages)

The survey had five sections:

1. formal and informal groups that the individuals belong to, as well as what new groups they like to see in the future
2. usage and satisfaction with public services, and ideas for future improvements
3. where advice and support is sought and from which organisations
4. importance of both individual and collective BME voice; involvement in voicing opinions, and ideas for opportunities to do so in future
5. importance of BME individuals and BME VCOs working collectively to develop public services and influence local decision-making.

Each section below summarises common themes and responses:

2.3 Findings

The number in parenthesis below indicate the number of respondents giving that answer.

Section one: groups, formal and informal

Interviewees were asked what formal groups they were a part of: Sompriti (86) a Mosque (24), a Church (10), Eastbourne Chinese Association (5), a Brighton based Chinese group (2), Shunar Bangla (an East Sussex based Bangladeshi group) (1), Scouts (1).

Interviewees were asked what kind of groups they would like to see developed in the future: more groups for young people and a community space for BME families (16), specific community work for their ethnic/language group (11), more opportunities to exercise (11), more cultural and social groups (9), women specific classes (4).

Section two: public services – usage, satisfaction and improvements

Respondents were asked about their usage and satisfaction on a range of public services, and also what improvements they felt could be made for the service. The services in question were:

1. Education
2. Housing
3. Community Safety/Policing
4. Health – Primary Care
5. Health – Secondary Care
6. Benefits
7. Economic Development
8. Environmental Services
9. Leisure
10. Social Services

The most used services were health care, both primary (125) and secondary (90) and education (102 - 58 adults education and 44 children's education) followed by environmental services (51), leisure (51) benefits (45), and housing (39). Less used services included community safety/policing (20), social services (8), and economic development (support for businesses) (6).

In terms of satisfaction, for each service, there were varying rates of satisfaction amongst those who used each service. The highest rate of satisfaction was in economic development (100%, 6 of 6 respondents satisfied) and with benefits (95%, 37 of 39 respondents satisfied). For all services the satisfaction rate was over 70%, except for social services (50%, 3 of 6 respondents satisfied) and community safety/policing (37% 7 of 19 respondents satisfied).

Regarding improvements to services, once again there were varying suggestions for improvement. Recurring themes across the different services included being able to access bilingual language support in order to access services, shorter waiting times for services to be delivered, and for some services, concerns that the service provider was racist, or not well-equipped enough to deal with racism.

Overall, respondents highlighted the importance of good quality public services and wanted their needs and requirements to be met in an appropriate manner.

For example, in terms of adult education, 12 respondents wanted more accessible and appropriate ESOL classes with 3 people adding that their needed to be more flexibility to fit in with work and family obligations and 6

people said they wanted to be treated more equally by service providers who had a better understanding and attitude.

When asked about community/safety/policing, 20 respondents had experience with the police. Of all those interviewed, 20 wanted to see more police on the streets and 5 stated that they wanted the police to treat everybody equally and be more concerned with racism. 4 people mentioned that they would like the police to be better at communicating with the community and keep victims of crime better informed.

Regarding economic development, 6 interviewees had accessed this service of which 2 said specifically that they had received information on new licensing laws via Sompriti.

8 people had used social services, of which 4 expressed that they needed bilingual and other support to access this service, and 3 people said that the long waiting list was a barrier to accessing this service.

Section three: advice and support

Respondents were asked where they went for advice and support when needed: Sompriti (88), CAB (55), Church (2), School (2), Eastbourne Chinese Association (1), Age Concern (1), Internet (1), Solicitor (2), Migrant Helpline (2), Housing Aid (2), ESDA (1), EBC (1), Police (4), 1 NHS Direct (1); and friends and family (52).

Section four: voicing opinions

In section four respondents were asked if they felt it was important for them to have a voice in developing local services and decision making. Almost all respondents, 127 people responded yes to this question. Reasons given for why this was important included : to make sure that services reflected needs and reflected the diversity of the community (39) and because it was felt that everyone should have a voice in the community and that having a voice made them feel part of the community (38).

Respondents were asked if they would like a voice in improving services and influencing local decision making: yes (45); through an organisation like Sompriti (26), through consultations and surveys (21), through directly through meeting with public authorities (12), and through more meetings, focus groups and conferences (9).

Respondents were also asked if they had ever been involved in voicing their opinion: involved through Sompriti BME Forums and events (15), participated in consultations through Sompriti (9), through a Sompriti elder's forum (1).

Respondents were further asked where they would go if they had a complaint about a public service: Sompriti (44), did not know where to go (13), council (12), directly to the service it is regarding (12), did not complain (12), CAB (6), a friend (3) and Migrant Helpline (2).

Section five: collaborative working

In section five, interviewees were asked whether they thought it was important for BME people and groups to work together to develop local public services and influence local decision-making. 104 respondents said that it was important.

Respondents were asked why this was important: by working together, they will be stronger and can make a difference (55), work together in order to support people and communities better (6), have a common voice and goals (5), and leads to an exchange of ideas giving more options and in which everyone can have a say (6).

Respondents were also asked how the Voluntary Sector and Community Groups could work together to create good quality public services for all: by meeting each other and communicating better (21), by working in partnership and selecting common priorities (5), Sompriti reflects what was needed (4), and community groups need to be better at listening to the community (3).

- *The main places respondents sought advice and support is from Sompriti (88), CABs (55) and from friends and family (52). However, when it came to making a complaint about a service, most respondents stated that they would go to Sompriti (44) rather than the CAB (6), or a friend (3). This indicates that respondents are comfortable seeking general advice from a range of agencies, but when it came to serious or complex issues like a complaint, they want to seek support from a BME organisation.*
- *Having a voice in developing local services and decision making is clearly very important to the majority of respondents with 93% of all respondents indicating that this is so.*
- *The majority of respondents feel it is important for BME people and groups to work together to help develop local public services and influence local decision-making because through collaboration and collective working, they will be stronger and can make a difference.*

Appendix 2. Faith Communities in East Sussex

1) Public Data from the 2001 Census

In 2001 for the first time in 150 years (since the 1851 census) the census as a public record of contemporary society was used to record aspects of religious life. However unlike the 1851 census which was used in part to record church attendance (or religious behaviour), the 2001 census attempted to produce a measure of religious belief. The surprise results in 2001 (apart from the emergence of groups such as the Jedi Knights) were the number of responses made by those with a Christian belief as they far exceeded the only current measure of behaviour (attendance) which is still recorded on an annual basis, by the Christian Churches.

The results for East Sussex from the 2001 census are reproduced below:

Religion	No's	Proportion	Sussex wide	E&W Av.
Christian	362420	73.6%	71.6%	71.7%
No religion	81185	16.49%	17.8%	14.8%
Religion not stated	40012	8.1%	7.8%	7.7%
Muslim	2984	0.6%	0.9%	3%
Other	2457	0.5%	0.5%	0.3%
Buddhist	1289	0.26%	0.32%	0.3%
Jewish	1021	0.2%	0.39%	0.5%
Hindu	807	0.16%	0.45%	1.1%
Sikh	149	0.03%	0.09%	0.6%

The population of East Sussex reflects certain aspects of the national profile, but there are significantly smaller communities of three of the “minority” faiths (Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs) identified in the census when compared to the average size across the country as a whole and the Jewish community is half the size of the average. These differences mean that any infrastructure provision for these faith communities and the work that they are engaged in will need to be better resourced than in places where there are greater economies of scale available through the communities themselves. The average for England and Wales would suggest that the faith communities would be larger by the inclusion of an additional 12000 Muslims, 7000 Hindus, 2800 Sikhs and 1500 Jews. Clearly nowhere will reflect the average completely but providing culturally relevant resources for the Muslim, Hindu and Sikh communities in parts of the County will present particular challenges. Eastbourne and Hastings between them provided home to half of the Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims in the County on the day of the census. This makes these relatively large population centres easier to reach out to, but creates an even stronger challenge across the rest of the large County.

1) Local statistics from the faith communities themselves

There do not appear to be any publicly published, community provided statistics for non Christian religions across East Sussex and so for those religions listed on the census, the data provided above is probably as good a source of data as can be found. There are however at least 17 faith communities represented in Sussex in a number of discrete worshipping communities of relatively small numbers of people. There are also anecdotal indications that some of the

smaller faith communities were under recorded in the census, for the same reasons that these communities are often hard to reach with other responses to statutory consultations.

The statistics for the Christian community must also be treated with care. It is not appropriate to challenge the stated beliefs of 73% of the population of East Sussex (a higher proportion than the country as a whole) who declared themselves to be Christians, however regular church attendance would suggest that there are around 10 people who declared themselves as Christians during the census process, for every person in the County who regularly attends a Christian church in the area. This ratio is consistent with similar figures nationally.

The data produced by the churches themselves are not entirely consistent from one church to another. Some record only adult attendance whilst others declare the number of individuals, irrespective of age. All of this data is produced primarily for (different) in-house purposes and some of the data is likely to be conservative in nature and other data indicates a more optimistic outlook. Finally there are churches which do not produce statistics at all and for these, the only number available is an estimate.

East Sussex Church Statistics

Denomination or Description	Congregations	Members
Church of England Churches	191	20111
Roman Catholic Churches	30	6846
Methodist Churches	30	2671
Baptist Churches	18	2030
United Reformed Churches	16	1098
Salvation Army	5	392
Quaker	9	298
Local Ecumenical Partnerships	10	?
Miscellaneous Churches with a tradition of more than 50 years	42	?
New Churches	34	?
Estimated Totals	385	40000

There are a significant number of people from minority ethnic groups who are part of the mainstream churches in the County as well as a number of churches with a predominantly strong ethnic make up. There are no figures currently available which identify either of these situations for the churches in East Sussex.

2) Existing faith based Infrastructure provision within the County

Faith based infrastructure typically follows one of two approaches.

1. Infrastructure based on belief or tradition.

Most of the 385 or so Christian churches in the County relate to one of a range of denominational structures or networks that have International, National and in most cases Regional expressions. Few of these structures are co-terminus with one another but most offer some form of support to enable the local congregations to work in their setting, offering advice and in some cases legal and charitable frameworks that enable workers to be employed and services to

be delivered to the local community. The most developed of these are the services offered by the Church of England, and the Roman Catholic Church along with the Methodist, Salvation Army and United Reformed Churches.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to attempt to record the infrastructure provision of even the largest of the Christian churches. These structures are also beyond the scope of any Government influence to change as some (especially within the Church of England) do require Acts of Parliament or else National or International Committees to agree to any substantive changes. The main agency which seeks to “join up” this infrastructure is the Churches Together network which operates at all of the levels that the Churches themselves operate.

The non Christian faiths are organised to varying degrees on an International and National basis, however there do not appear to be any which currently work with any form of regional structure. There are no agencies which attempt to “join up” any of the structures across faith boundaries (to do so would risk damaging the individual identity of these communities), but improving relationships between the various faith groups does enable the better resourced to be generous to those with less resources on issues such as responding to crisis or raising concerns on matters of public policy.

2. Infrastructure which crosses boundaries and traditions.

Some structures such as the Sussex Faith Forum cross boundaries of faith and others remain within the confines of one faith but cross internal boundaries such as Churches Together or the Jewish Representative Council (which is primarily focused on the Synagogues in Brighton & Hove, but has some influence and involvement in the Jewish community in Eastbourne and Hastings). Typically these organisations operate as networks and have little or no resources with which to run buildings or employ people. However they enable the churches and other faith groups to work together more effectively. Some of these groups or networks are primarily intended to aid internal cohesion and communication whilst others have a more outward facing aspect. Most will engage with agencies and bodies beyond their members and are able to respond to the changing external agendas although some do so more willingly than others. Most have organisations rather than individuals as their core membership and few have received any external funding to date. However most seek to avoid duplication of effort or competition for resources and work to increase efficiency.

The infrastructure based on individual tradition is beyond the scope of this paper to map out. However some of the more limited cross boundary infrastructure is outlined below:

Churches Together

The network is made up of groups in towns and villages across the County, each of which operates independently; usually under the name Churches Together (exceptions include Crosslink – based in Hailsham). The groups were known as Council’s of Churches until 1991 when Churches Together was adopted by most. Some have a more inclusive membership than others, in terms of the churches in their area; some are mostly urban, and others have a

wider spread; most enable their members to plan events together which the individual churches could not achieve alone; a few extend to running services such as homelessness schemes and youth initiatives. At present the groups in East Sussex include:

Churches Together in Bexhill
Churches Together in Crowborough
Churches Together in Eastbourne (split into six neighbourhood groups)
Forest Row Churches
Crosslink (Hailsham)
Churches Together in Hastings & St Leonards
Churches Together in Heathfield
Churches Together in the Lewes area
Churches Together in Newhaven
Churches Together in Rye and District
Churches Together Seaford
Churches Together in Uckfield
Churches Together in Wadhurst

Christian Action Network

The C.A.N. was formed in 1991 to provide primarily a web based directory of Christian based social action projects across Sussex and an e-mail group for members that provides information focused on Christian initiatives and also cascades information from national and regional voluntary sector bodies such as NCVO, RAISE and VOLG to groups that are not currently members of such organisations.

Sussex Faith Forum

In early 2003, at the request of Sussex Police Authority, a small number of statutory agencies met, along with Churches Together in Sussex to consider if a Sussex wide forum could be created into which faith communities could gather. The group planned and held an initial Sussex Faith Forum at Sussex University in March 2004 and the 60 people who attended expressed some willingness to meet again, but also expressed that they wished to control their own destiny and that resources to hold such events would be beyond the individuals and organisations in attendance. There are indications that both East Sussex and West Sussex County Councils would be willing to assist in the development of such a forum (as would other agencies), but it is not certain who from the faith communities would be willing to drive the development of the forum. One of the benefits of a Sussex wide forum is that faith communities in East and West Sussex are not all centred in places such as Horsham and Crawley where interfaith bodies do exist.

Council of Christians and Jews, Bexhill

This paper does not offer information on behalf of this group.

Jewish Representative Council

This paper does not offer information on behalf of this group which is based in Brighton & Hove.

3) Infrastructure needs of faith communities in East Sussex

Faith communities in East Sussex provide many services that would otherwise need to be provided by statutory agencies or other voluntary sector bodies. These take many forms:

The neighbourhood lunch clubs, Pre-Schools, or toddlers and carers groups that are provided by many faith communities are too numerous to count as are the many other neighbourhood based services. Some of these facilities are primarily available to those who are members of the faith group, but these are no less important as those who attend do so because they need such services. However the vast majority of these schemes (run either by the faith communities or by others) are provided to meet the needs of the wider community. Many of these services are resourced entirely by the communities or are subsidised by them (such as providing accommodation at no cost, or below market rates).

There are many services which are provided by faith communities which are beyond the scope of any one church, synagogue or mosque. Examples include Aquila based in Crowborough but meeting needs across the South East, People Matter in Eastbourne, Hastings and Rother YMCA, Farm Crisis Network and services provided by Chichester Diocese (Church of England) and The Diocese of Arundel and Brighton (Roman Catholic) who each run substantial services including schools in East Sussex. These vary significantly in terms of where they obtain their funding from and how much help they need (or provide) in terms of employment law, funding advice, and specialist skills such as being a Registered Social Landlord.

It is impossible to fully determine the Infrastructure needs of such agencies, without a detailed mapping exercise which would be costly and take more time than is available under Change Up. The groups range from a church made up of a handful of elderly people, who work together to run a lunch club for their neighbours to Habitat for Humanity which operates on several Continents providing self build housing. In any case there are many infrastructure needs that will be met by the agencies established to help the wider voluntary and community sector. However a good local example of the work that can be achieved when the resources of time and money are provided is the report “Being Here” produced by Engage in Brighton & Hove (The Brighton & Hove Churches Community Development Association) or “Beyond Belief?” produced by the South East England Faith Forum.

Some examples of the infrastructure needs are:

- One clear need is for all faith communities to be treated as potential serious partners in the delivery of public services, by statutory agencies and other voluntary and community sector groups.
- There are some common issues which affect faith communities, primarily around the translation of faith values into language and structures that can be understood by those who are unused to the faith sector and vice versa.
- There are barriers that have developed over time which need to be dismantled. These include the tradition of putting faith groups in the same category as political parties when it comes to funding criteria. This has disadvantaged faith communities when applying for public funds, and yet

ignores the indications that money invested in the social provision provided by faith communities can often go further because of the existing infrastructure of such communities and the high commitment to the volunteering ethos by such groups.

- Because many of the trusts and companies that help fund the voluntary sector are unwilling to fund the faith sector, along with the view amongst many faith groups that the lottery is an evil to be avoided, there is a greater need for public funding targeted at faith groups.

- A commitment by public bodies to ensure that funding for the support of faith bodies, is used to build internal capacity and not simply handed to generalist voluntary sector infrastructure bodies to work with faith groups. This means treating faith infrastructure provision in the same way as BME infrastructure provision.

4) A list of the known non Christian organisations within the County

It is impractical to list all 385 Christian Churches and the various social agencies which operate on their behalf across East Sussex. However the following is a list of the known non Christian groups in the County.

7th Day Adventists 12 Fairlight Road, Ore, East Sussex
Bahai Centre 34a Wickham Avenue, Bexhill on Sea, East Sussex, TN39 3EN
Bahai Centre 19 Burton Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex, BN21 2RF
Christian Science, Spencer Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex, BN21 7PB
Hastings Hindu Association
Council of Christians & Jews 62 Towers Road West, St Leonards, Hastings, East Sussex
Jehovah Witness Kingdom Hall, Victoria Road, Hailsham, East Sussex
Jehovah Witness Kingdom Hall, Churchwood Drive, St Leonard, Hastings, East Sussex,
Eastbourne Jewish Society 22 Susans Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex
Hastings Jewish Society, PO Box 74, Bexhill, East Sussex, TN39 4ZZ
Muslim Centre 38 Little Ridge Avenue, St Leonards, Hastings, East Sussex
TN37 7LS
Islamic Association, Hastings
Islamic Cultural Centre, Eastbourne
Kids and Muslim Mums – Hastings
Muslim Women Association – Eastbourne
Seaford Mosque
Muslim Training College, Mark Cross, East Sussex
Christian Spiritualist Church, 6 Victoria Road, Bexhill, East Sussex
Spiritualist Brotherhood Church, 8-9 Portland Place, Hastings, East Sussex
Westgate Unitarian Chapel, High Street, Lewes, East Sussex
Unitarian Church, Old Meeting House, Ditchling, East Sussex
Northiam Unitarian Chapel, Rye, East Sussex
Unitarian Church 14 Downsway, Berwick East Sussex, BN26 6TD

APPENDIX 3. Traveller and Gypsies

1. Background

In East Sussex there are four permanent sites, one transit site and a few privately owned Gypsy and Traveller sites. Many Gypsies and Travellers also live in social and private housing throughout the county. Gypsies and Travellers are a statistically invisible ethnic minority, recognised as distinct ethnic groups under race relations legislation and case law, but are not included in the census or routine ethnic monitoring. A conservative estimate of the number of Gypsies and travellers in the county is around 2000 people.

The community is also diverse, consisting of separate ethnic groups, such as Irish Travellers and English Romani Gypsies. In reality, it is not one community but a range of communities, with differing cultures and aspirations.

Just as the community is largely invisible in ethnic monitoring and is under served by voluntary groups, it is also voiceless, with very few voluntary or community groups representing its interests at a national, regional or local level. As a result it is often excluded from policymaking and most consultation work, because there are very few obvious access points for those from outside the community. It is also self-segregating and highly self-reliant, which helps to re-enforce its isolation from geographical communities that live alongside it. Not surprisingly, this segregation and isolation also extends to its relationship with the voluntary sector.

Therefore an aim of this research hasn't been to establish the infrastructure needs of Gypsy and Traveller voluntary or community groups as none exist, but rather establishing whether there is the aspiration and need for the creation of Gypsy and Traveller voluntary groups that can, in time, become connected to the wider voluntary and public sector infrastructure and to establish the community development support that would be needed to support this.

2. Methodology

A Traveller and Gypsy outreach worker conducted 25 in-depth interviews with a diverse set of people from the Traveller and Gypsy (T&G) community. All interviews were conducted face-to-face in people's venue of choice, often where they lived. There was also a community event held in Wealden at the end of January where people had a chance to meet and further discuss some of the issues raised in the survey and plans for the future.

In addition, Friends, Family and Travellers, a national Traveller and Gypsy advocacy organisation based in Brighton, and Sussex Traveller Action Group, a small direct action group with members from across Sussex, were engaged through the ASP process. Further the Director of the Gypsy Media Company, based in Hastings played an active role as a member of the East Sussex ASP Steering Group and organising and facilitating the January event.

3.Groups

Friends Families and Travellers (FFT): FFT aims to work towards a more equitable society where everyone has the right to travel and to stop without persecution on account of their lifestyle. FFT helps members of the T&G community to access services and casework provided is often to address discrimination, access to housing and sites, police complaints etc. This service is provided via phone, drop-in and client visits. FFT has a full time manager/caseworker, a part-time assistant caseworker, and a part time book-keeper/administrator.

FFT runs various programme of work, including:

- The Sussex Traveller Women’s Health Project

FFT is working in partnership with health and social care agencies to address the inequalities in exciting services, promote a model of Traveller and Gypsy participation in health promotion and develop their skills. This project involves a FFT Health Project Co-ordinator, a part-time outreach worker and a part-time health visitor.

- Cyber Pilot

FFT facilitates an interactive website for Traveller and Gypsy children to promote the awareness of Traveller and Gypsy issues and promote computer awareness and skills. This project is developed and maintained by FFT’s Community Web Manager.

Sussex Traveller Action Group (STAG): STAG aims to be a debating forum and a direct action group that helps to empower Travellers and Gypsies in Sussex in order to influence local authorities to address the needs of Traveller and Gypsies.

The Gypsy Media Company, based in Hastings is Britain’s only media company run by and for Gypsies themselves. It’s Director, is the country’s only Romany journalist and has been an active member of the East Sussex ASP since its inception. The Gypsy Media Company specialises in communications, research and training projects about Britain’s 300 000 Gypsies and travellers. As communication consultants to the public, private ad voluntary sector they combine media and research skills with an insight into their own community.

4. Individuals

The demographic breakdown of the 25 individual T&G people interviews is recorded below:

Age of participants	20’s	30’s	40’s	50’s	60’s	70’s
Number	2	6	6	2	4	4

Gender of participants	Female	Male
Number	17	8

Accommodation of	Sited	Housed	Mobile	Own land
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participants				
Number	5	10	7	1

Location of participants	Lewes District	Wealden	Eastbourne
Number	8	11	3

Ethnicity in participants own words	Traveller	Gypsy	Gypsy by marriage
Number	2	21	1

There were four sections to the interview:

1. Support and Advice
2. Self-Organising
3. Public Services
4. Making a Living

4.1. Support and Advice: This section aimed to better understand where T&Gs sought advice and support, as well as asked what other support structures were needed and the VCS could better meet the needs of T&Gs.

6 interviewees responded that they sought support and help from the Traveller Education Service; 5 mentioned Friends Family and Travellers; 5 interviewees said the T&G health visitor; and 4 participants said the ESCC Gypsy Liaison Officer. 5 people said that they would turn to family or elders in their community. 3 people said their GP, 3 said the CAB and 2 mentioned NOVAS. It is notable that 3 interviewees said they had nowhere to go, as they felt that there was no point in doing so, as they would not receive support even if they did.

In terms of knowing what organisations existed that provide support and advice, 8 people said they did not know what organisations existed. In addition to the above mentioned organisations, 2 interviewees also mentioned the Gypsy Council.

For future support structures, 4 interviewees wanted a support and advice centre for Travellers, 3 wanted outreach/on site support, and 3 wanted outreach education. It was also noted that 3 people wanted specialised services by Travellers for Travellers, although 1 person felt that T&Gs would not use any specialist support, as they were suspicious of organised provision.

4.2. Self-organisation: This section examined the representation and voice of the T&G community.

Of those interviewed, 18 did not feel represented by any organisation/agency, and 6 did. 24 interviewees felt that it was important for them and their community to have a voice in developing local services and decision-making, with 1 participant adding that this was “because we are as important as any other person”.

9 people had previously been involved in voicing their opinions, of which 3 had attending a public meeting about site and 2 had spoken out at Firle. 2 people said that this survey was the first time their views had been sought.

To develop and maintain the voice, 4 interviewees felt that it must be traveller led to best represent the community and 4 interviewees said that they must feel listened to. 2 interviewees said that they must be informed of meetings; 2 said to get help with transport and have their expenses covered; 2 felt they needed support to speak up and 2 said that FFT needed support to continue the outreach health project.

19 interviewees felt the need for the T&G communities to work together on common issues, with the main reason coming from 8 interviewees, that they must accept cultural differences and develop a strong common voice. 5 interviewees said that we must help each other and learn from each other.

22 interviewees felt that there was a need for a self-organised Traveller and Gypsy community initiative, 14 of which noted that because of common experience, this would have to be T&G led. 1 interviewee was conscious that there was a need to involve all T&G people, and not just “gypsy activists” or “elders”.

4.3. Public Services: As with the interviews carried out with the other BME individuals, for the T&G interviews, respondents were asked about their usage and satisfaction on a range of public services, and also what improvements they felt could be made for the service. The services in question were:

1. Education
2. Accommodation
3. Health – Primary Care
4. Health – Secondary Care
5. Social Services
6. Community Safety/Policing
7. Benefits
8. Economic Development
9. Environmental Services
10. Leisure

Education: 10 had used limited adult education services, and 18 had used children’s education services. Of 20 responses, 8 interviewees were dissatisfied with the service due to bullying, racism or always being moved on. Most interviewees felt that the community educated itself from their parents, collective knowledge or oral tradition.

When asked about their vision for improved Educational services for the Traveller and Gypsy community, 18 wanted equal chances and choices like everyone else, as many wanted their children to read and write well, greater flexibility with a combination of school and home learning.

Accommodation:

13 interviewees wanted more permanent and transit sites in East Sussex and 11 interviewees wanted these to be provided by local councils and for sites to be appropriately located. When people were asked what works and what does not work 5 interviewees said that sites need to fit family sizes (6-8 pitches) and 5 stressed the importance of well run, clean sites. 5 people said that planning permission was a barrier, and 6 wanted to be able to buy land and get planning permission. 6 of those interviewed stated that they were housed but would prefer to live on sites.

Health – Primary and Secondary Care: 6 interviewees had accessed primary care, of which 2 were not satisfied with the service, feeling not listened to, and only being accepted after health visitor intervention. 17 interviewees had accessed secondary care, of which 1 was not satisfied with the service.

The majority of interviewees were confident in traditional remedies, and that the community cared for itself. 7 interviewees felt that the T&G health visitor was good and worked for them. 5 interviewees felt there was more need for mental health provisions, and 4 felt that GPs need more T&G culture awareness.

Social Services: From the interviews, there appeared to be suspicion about social services not respecting and understanding Gypsy and Traveller culture. Interviewees mentioned the fear of having their children removed and previous bad experience of social services. Some interviewees again noted that the community takes care of itself, and that any social service support needs to be G&T led.

Community Safety/Policing: Only 2 interviewees were satisfied about policing, whereas 16 were not satisfied as they felt that they suffered racism, that the police harass them, are violent towards them or monitor them and some live in fear of the police.

15 interviewees feel that the community is self-policing in the way it deals with disorder and crime within the community. In terms of future vision, responses included being treated equally to everybody else, to be free and safe, and to be educated to know their rights.

Benefits: Most interviewed did not use benefits. 4 had accessed different benefits – disability, carers allowance, job seekers allowance and incapacity benefit. 2 noted that they knew about the benefits via their GP.

Environmental services: 4 interviewees said that they “need rubbish collection and toilets on all sites” and 4 others said that some sites are placed on rubbish or toxic waste site/ sewage overflowing/rats and flies. However 9 interviewees feel that the community provides for itself by removing/burning their own rubbish. In terms of vision, there was mention on having better rubbish and toilet facilities on sites are T&G people are.

Leisure: It appears that most interviewed did not use publicly provided leisure facilities, and entertained themselves through family events, and care for their animals.

4.4 Making a living

13 interviewees felt there had been a change in the way the community made a living. Changes such as mechanisation and cheaper labour have affected this. When asked what support was needed, the majority of replies were around skills that enabled self-employment such as building (bricklaying, fencing, carpentry), agriculture, mechanical and hairdressing. Education was highly stressed by many interviewees as important for the community to continue making a living.

5. Recommendations and priorities

One very real reason why the Gypsy and Traveller community does not access help from VCS infrastructure organisations is there are no Gypsy and Traveller led voluntary and community organisations. There are complex reasons why the Gypsy community does not access help from frontline organisations more than it does. But one factor must be limited knowledge about the existence of those organisations, combined with an enduring suspicion of the gorgia (non-Gypsy) community and a perception that many gorgia's would not ever want to help a Gypsy or a Traveller. Another factor is that Gypsy and Traveller needs are often so specific and particular to their own situation that many frontline organisations do not have the knowledge or experience to be of much help.

Research with community members has demonstrated that there is a real desire to start and contribute to a Gypsy and Traveller-led voluntary organisation. A Gypsy and Traveller organisation could be supported by other infrastructure organisations and serve as an interface with other frontline voluntary and statutory organisations to direct Gypsy and Traveller people to other groups within the voluntary sector.

Recommendation

Explore the feasibility of the establishment of a Gypsy and Traveller-led voluntary organisation which could deliver services to the Gypsy and Traveller community either covering just East Sussex or a larger region depending on the conclusions of the Change Up Additional Support Programme work in other counties in the South East.