Preventative Services for Black and Minority Ethnic Children

A Final Report of the National Evaluation of the Children’s Fund
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The National Evaluation of the Children's Fund (NECF) ran from January 2003 to March 2006. A large number of people were involved in a variety of ways. Here we list members of the team who worked on either part-time or full-time bases during the thirty-nine months of the evaluation.

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Executive Summary

This report considers the strategies adopted by two Children’s Fund partnerships for preventative work with black and minority ethnic children. This element of the evaluation adopted a Theory of Change approach intended to make links between the activities put in place and the intended outcomes.

Context and key issues

• The NECF work exploring services for black and minority ethnic children took place in two case study partnerships: a large city (Site A) and a smaller city (Site B). In Site A, the focus was on African Caribbean children. In Site B, the focus was broader and included children from African Caribbean, Asian and mixed heritage backgrounds.

• Evaluation of service development and provision with and for black and minority ethnic communities has to be set within the context of key events that frame service development and delivery. Of particular significance is the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 which places a positive duty to combat discrimination on all public bodies, including schools, social service departments and health services. This involves a responsibility to conduct a race equality audit of organisational systems, structures and practices. Evidence suggests that there is little progress in implementing the Act, a matter of concern in the context of the reconfiguration of children and family services, and the move towards integrated services.

• The rationale for many Children’s Fund projects supporting black and minority ethnic children arises from concerns that they gain less benefit than their white peers from improvements in educational attainment. There is a growing body of evidence that school-based processes are an important contributory factor in the production of poor outcomes for black and minority ethnic pupils. The latter, (in particular African Caribbean pupils) are over-represented in school exclusion figures, and their general experience is of being over-regulated and over-disciplined. This challenges dominant conceptualisations of social exclusion that define groups as ‘at risk’ by virtue of their ethnicity and focuses instead on a need to understand the complexity of the ‘barriers to inclusion’.
Strategies and objectives

- The two rationales of the case study sites demonstrated common characteristics: the emphasis on learning and education as key to pathways out of social exclusion; the drivers for the shaping of provision being within the black and minority ethnic communities rather than within existing mainstream provision; and the development of separate, targeted/themed provision rather than an integrated approach based on geography (for example, specific wards) or nature of need (for example, children formally excluded from school).

- The rationales and strategies adopted placed the emphasis on alternative supplementary educational provision and equipping individual children and their families with the skills needed to progress through the mainstream. The strategies gave less attention to changing mainstream provision – the focus was on meeting the needs of the children through alternative services and opportunities.

- The strategies adopted by both case study sites relied heavily upon existing black and minority ethnic community networks and providers to develop and drive forward the work of the Children's Fund. The capacity of the groups to meet these demands and expectations, without any pre-investment to ensure such roles were feasible, caused tension and some difficulty.

- Both case study sites decided that the black and minority ethnic community groups and providers were best placed to take forward the strategies, rather than mainstream agencies. This is linked to the desire to develop culturally-responsive services that are tailored to meet the needs of black and minority ethnic children and generate opportunities to use existing knowledge and expertise to develop provision.

Implementation and service development

- Site A placed an emphasis on funding new services, whilst Site B focused on enhancing existing provision. These different approaches to implementation revealed different strengths and weaknesses. In Site A services could work from the outset within the Children's Fund objectives, but were fewer in number with a greater number of services having funding withdrawn than in...
Site B. Supporting existing projects meant that not all Site B services were able to articulate a specific Children’s Fund dimension. There is evidence that some projects simply saw the Children's Fund as a grant-giving scheme.

The evaluation of the services funded and developed by the partnerships suggests a number of shared characteristics:

- There were ongoing tensions between enhancing existing provision and developing new provision. This had implications for sustainability, take-up and accessibility.

- Using existing providers allowed pre-existing infrastructures to be built upon; supporting new services placed extra demands on capacity building – with the resultant risk that services could not be maintained. However, as discussed elsewhere in NECF findings, linking with existing providers can mean that the capacity for innovation and change is reduced.

- There is also evidence that established services built upon work with children and families who already knew about the project. The services that gained additional funding via the Children's Fund were able to enhance existing activity, which built upon work with children and families who already used the services in some way. The fieldwork undertaken by NECF gathered evidence that the ‘new’ services did encourage children to take up opportunities who previously had had limited access to preventative services.

- The evidence suggests a mixed picture of participation. Individual projects were working to include children and families in the development of the services, but hard-pressed parents found it difficult to find time to become involved. More broadly there was less evidence of child and family involvement in the strategic development of services.

- All the services placed a value – as did the central Children’s Fund partnerships – on building on community and local knowledge to support culturally responsive services.
• Common issues in the development of the services included: how best to engage families given the demands on family life, the extent to which poverty was a dominant characteristic of children’s lives and the impact of limited funding and resources on the quality of the services.

• A number of practices were observed and experienced as helpful and beneficial. These included: workers who were able to work flexibly and creatively to engage children, staff or volunteers who reflected the cultural backgrounds, knowledge and understandings of the children, using events and activities that were aimed at providing a positive view of children’s cultures whilst stimulating new learning opportunities, ongoing consultation with the children and communities using the projects, and promoting the projects within the communities who will use them so they are seen as useful resources.

Impact
• The data gathered indicates that those children and families that used the Children's Fund black and minority ethnic provision experienced the services as helpful and useful. The gains described by those providing the services and those using the services suggested that the services have supported children to learn and to take up new opportunities and experiences. There is also evidence that families have seen a change in their children’s behaviour and that the services have encouraged the take-up of productive, less disruptive activities by children.

• The monitoring and evaluation processes adopted by the services and the Children's Fund teams meant it was impossible to track the impact of the services beyond the descriptive data gathered. The intended outcomes for the services as articulated within the original theories of change included hoped-for improvements in mainstream educational outcomes, improved overall wellbeing and some changes in practices. The services studied collected very little data that might usefully capture the changes that were anticipated. This is in part connected to the limited contact between the services and the mainstream preventative service providers. The absence of these links meant tracking changes in children beyond those seen by the community providers and families proved difficult.
• The intended outcomes for children as a result of supporting the valuing of their heritage and the promotion of skills for coping with racism are very difficult to measure. Children, families and service providers talked about increased confidence and self-respect as well as cultural knowledge and appreciation.

Recommendations
• If preventative services are to maintain a themed approach for black and minority ethnic children, the evidence suggests careful processes and structures will need to be developed to ensure learning from the theme cascades into other providers and services and informs the wider development of children's services. Failure to do so may make mainstream services less responsive to the needs of black and minority ethnic children, and the valuable learning within the theme may become lost.

• Whilst a limited number of providers did attempt to influence the mainstream, the majority were focused on ‘changing the child’ whilst still perceiving the mainstream as difficult and discriminatory. Qualitative data suggested that whilst individual children were able to perform better at school, no service was able to describe changes within local mainstream provision that would reduce the barriers faced by black and minority ethnic children. Future developments should consider how to ensure very early ‘sign up’ by mainstream providers to both the reasons for change and the change process. Failure to get this local engagement will reduce the impact of any themed services that are developed on outcomes for children.

• The ongoing facilitation and support of informal and formal networks for services to marginalised children seems likely to enhance the overall impact of the provision and should therefore be a priority for future strategic and service development.

• To promote service sustainability, careful work is needed very early on to build the necessary capacity within small voluntary groups to meet the expectations of the funders and deliver the services. Future developments should avoid any assumptions about capacity and should listen carefully to past experiences to
avoid replicating difficulties. Clarity about medium and long-term funding arrangements is crucial for small-scale organisations to act as partners in service development.

- The practices developed and supported in the services evaluated offer useful learning for future service provision. Mechanisms are needed to ensure that the responsive and beneficial practices that exist within the services are recognised and learnt from by mainstream providers. Ensuring that the practices valued by children and families inform future mainstream practices would seem a valuable development from the work of the partnerships.

- The development of effective networks and forums would seem a helpful way of creating opportunities for enhanced participation. However, pressures facing all the services in terms of resources and poverty were a barrier to effective participation. The processes for participation will need wider local support and resourcing for this development to be possible.
Chapter 1: Introduction

This report is one result of our work to understand how Children’s Fund partnerships have worked with particular target groups: black and minority ethnic children, Gypsy/Traveller children, children from refugee and asylum seeking families, disabled children, and children at risk of crime and anti-social behaviour. Literature reviews commissioned by NECF indicate that there is limited experience of preventative work with most of these groups and the learning from this element of the evaluation is intended to help those designing preventative services for some of the most marginalised groups of children and young people. This report is based on work carried out in two of the 16 case study partnerships that were the focus of the national evaluation. This opening chapter sets out the details of the Children’s Fund initiative and the scope of this report.

The Children’s Fund: an outline

The Children's Fund Prevention Programme was announced as part of the UK 2000 Spending Review, following the work of the Social Exclusion Unit and in particular the ‘PAT12’ report, ‘Young People at Risk’ (SEU, 2000), which highlighted the need for multi-agency services for children and young people at risk of social exclusion. Full guidance was issued in early 2001 and each local authority area in England was invited to develop a multi-agency Partnership Board, which should include voluntary and community sector representation, to design a strategic plan for service delivery. The Children's Fund was delivered across all 150 top tier local authorities in 149 partnership arrangements. Plans outlined the demographic features of the area, structures in place for the delivery of the programme, details of inter-agency collaboration, including capacity building with voluntary and community groups and evidence of consultation with children and young people. They also provided information on intended strategies for the prevention of social exclusion and the participation of children, young people and their families in service development.

The Children's Fund Guidance (CYPU, 2001) was issued by the cross-departmental Children and Young People’s Unit, which managed the Children's Fund as part of a wider portfolio of preventative services for children, young people and families. Changes in the structure of children’s services within central government, culminating in the Children Act 2004, led to the Unit being absorbed into a new ‘Children, Young People and Families Directorate’ located within DfES in late 2003. The Guidance set out the overarching objective of the Children’s Fund:

- to provide additional resources over and above those provided through mainstream statutory funding, specific programmes and through specific earmarked funding streams. It should engage and support voluntary and community organisations in playing an active part and should enable the full
range of services to work together to help children overcome poverty and disadvantage.

(CYPU, 2001, p6)

Beyond this, there were two key objectives and seven sub-objectives. These encouraged local Children’s Fund partnerships to focus on effective collaborative working to address needs linked to education, health, anti-social behaviour, user involvement and capacity building. Partnerships were also expected to enter into an ‘ongoing dialogue’ with children, families and their communities in order to facilitate their participation in the development, design and delivery of Children’s Fund programmes and services. Such services should offer early intervention, be multi-agency and focused on prevention.

The first wave of programmes was funded from January 2001; Wave Two from February 2002 and Wave Three from December 2002. Funding was initially secured until 2006. It was subsequently extended until 2008, although the allocation reduced over time in order to promote the mainstreaming of effective services and the establishment of links to the emerging joint planning and commissioning arrangements arising from the Green Paper *Every Child Matters* (DfES, 2003a) and the subsequent Children Act 2004 (HMSO, 2004). The allocation to the programme overall was £960m.

The *Guidance* provided a model for understanding the preventative focus of the initiative using four levels – ranging from broad generalist services through to focused remedial services. The model draws on the earlier work of Hardiker (Hardiker, *et al.*, 1991; Hardiker, 1999) and Children’s Fund services were expected to address levels 2 and 3:

- **Level One: Diversionary.** Here the focus is before problems can be seen – thus prevention strategies are likely to focus on whole populations.
- **Level Two: Early prevention.** Implies that problems are already beginning to manifest themselves and action is needed to prevent them becoming serious or worse.
- **Level Three: Heavy-end prevention.** Would focus on where there are multiple, complex and long-standing difficulties that will require a customisation of services to meet the needs of the individual concerned.
- **Level Four: Restorative prevention.** Focuses on reducing the impact of an intrusive intervention. This is the level of prevention that would apply to, for example, children and young people in public care, those permanently
excluded from school or in youth offender institutions or supervision and/or those receiving assistance within the child protection framework (CYPU, 2001, p37)

One consequence of the work of NECF has been to suggest an alternative way of thinking about prevention that recognises the multi-dimensional nature of the needs and circumstances of children at risk of social exclusion. This is outlined in the overall final report of the project (Edwards, et al., 2006).

**Target groups**

NECF’s mapping of the Children's Fund revealed that, in planning services, partnerships developed programmes of services that targeted geographical neighbourhoods, areas and communities, and particular social groups (NECF, 2003; see also Hughes and Fielding, 2006). Calculation of overall usage of Children’s Fund services has not been possible, but survey work conducted in selected wards indicated that 10% of families and 9% of children living in those wards have used services in the previous 12 months (Edwards, et al., 2006, Chapter 4).

The original mapping by NECF of Children's Fund partnerships indicated that black and minority ethnic children were a high priority for partnerships as they began to develop their early activity (NECF, 2003). At this early stage in the development of the Children's Fund, over half of all partnerships identified black and minority ethnic children as a group they intended to focus upon. This focus was particularly strong in Wave One partnerships with 65% reporting a focus on black and minority ethnic children. (This could be linked to the demographic patterns of poverty and ethnicity). However, this picture is a snapshot – with programme managers including a diverse range of children within the grouping of ‘BME’ (black and minority ethnic). For example, this included refugee and asylum seeking children, who form the focus of a separate NECF report.

More recently (autumn 2005) a survey of programme managers conducted by NECF identified a decrease in the focus on black and minority ethnic groups:
Have you targeted services on any of the following groups of children and young people?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target groups for Children’s Fund services</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gypsies/Travellers</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children from black and minority ethnic communities</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refugee and asylum seeking children</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disabled children</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children at risk of crime and anti-social behaviour</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Based on 119 partnerships. Percentages rounded to nearest 1%*

Are any of the following groups to be a continued focus for targeted activities or services under new arrangements?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups which are to be continued focus under new arrangements</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gypsies/Travellers</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children from black and minority ethnic communities</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refugee and asylum seeking children</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disabled children</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children at risk of crime and anti-social behaviour</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As these tables illustrate, overall the trend was away from an emphasis on specific groups, with all the groups originally identified receiving less targeted attention. The links between this trend and the new emerging arrangements for integrated children’s services are discussed in the conclusion of this report. Discussion later in this report will also explore some of the emerging rationales for the changing emphases for services, and the learning developing from the Children's Fund about themed and non-themed services for black and minority ethnic children. It is therefore sufficient at this point to note that black and minority ethnic children have been, and continue to be, a group to which the Children's Fund has paid particular attention.

The Children's Fund partnerships nationally have adopted different terms to describe the children and communities that are the focus of their activities. For the purposes of this report, the term black and minority ethnic children is used to refer to ‘people of African, Caribbean and South Asian descent. This term also includes people of Chinese origins and people of mixed race who have one parent from these groups’ (Ahmed, 2004).

However, it is recognised that the terms used can be contested; they are based on the terminology used by the Children's Fund partnerships studied. As Ahmed notes:
The use of the politically inclusive term ‘black’ to include South Asian minority groups has been contested over many years. Increasingly, the term Asian or even South Asian is also being seen as inadequate and imprecise for discussing questions of social policy and social care interventions. Socio-economic differences within and between minority ethnic groups have now become apparent with some groups being more economically and educationally successful than others. In recent years, categorisations based on religion have gained additional currency and religion along with nationality or country of heritage has become significant identifiers of identity for people of all ages. Where appropriate such specificity will be applied. However, the politics of identity is continuously evolving, often in response to global politics. Identities are multiple, fluid and hybrid and socially constructed definitions are subject to change.

(Ahmed, 2004, p3)

Methods
The original aim of looking at strategies in two partnerships was to compare the approaches adopted, what these were able to achieve, and the implications of any differences between these. This was intended to contribute learning about the design of programmes of work capable of addressing the social exclusion experienced by black and minority ethnic children. However, between the partnerships that formed the focus of the evaluation of services for black and minority ethnic children, there were considerable similarities in the intentions and activities developed. This report therefore draws together the approaches in exploring the outcomes and learning for service development to black and minority ethnic children.

The NECF work exploring services for black and minority ethnic children took place in two case study partnerships: a large city (Site A) and a smaller city (Site B), one site was a Wave One partnership, the other a Wave Two partnership.

In Site A, the focus was on African Caribbean children. The city has high indicators of deprivation, with approximately 30% of its population made up from ethnic minority communities. This is compared to 9.1% across England as a whole. Levels of employment, the numbers claiming benefits and income support and the indicators of ill health all show the city facing particular problems of social exclusion and economic deprivation. Demographically black African and Caribbean families are not spread evenly across the city – there are a number of wards within the city where African Caribbean families are highly represented. In 2000-2001, within the African Caribbean communities in the city, there were emerging concerns about educational attendance and attainment, and rates of school exclusion. The pattern was emerging of some groups of black and ethnic minority children – African Caribbean boys in
particular – being over-represented in rates of exclusion, and in consistently underachieving when compared to their white peer group, leading to community and professional concerns. Specifically the pattern indicated that African Caribbean pupils performed better in early years than in later years of the education system, and that African Caribbean boys in particular were seen to be underachieving in GCSE/GNVQ results. This was coupled with African Caribbean children being significantly over-represented in the local ‘looked after’ children population.

In Site B, the focus of the theme that NECF explored was broader than in Site A, and included children from African Caribbean, Asian and mixed heritage backgrounds. Site B is a smaller city but also with a diverse population, with a proportion of children from black and other minority ethnic groups that is equal to the national (UK), average. Black and minority ethnic children and families are concentrated in particular geographical areas of the city. These wards suffer from high levels of disadvantage across a range of domains, including low quality housing, and high levels of unemployment and crime. The initial planning and consultations, which informed the development of the Children’s Fund programme, highlighted the social exclusion and disadvantage experienced by black and minority ethnic communities. In particular, the lower educational attainment, higher rates of school exclusions, and the lack of services to meet black and minority ethnic children’s needs were identified as areas for the Children’s Fund to address.

We used a Theories of Change (ToC) approach to evaluation (Connell and Kubisch, 1998). A Theory of Change is a statement coming from those designing and delivering services of how and why the actions planned will deliver the outcomes that are sought. The rationales or assumptions underpinning decisions about activities and services are usually implicit within change programmes. A ToC approach to evaluation involves researchers working with stakeholders as closely as possible to the start of the programme to make them explicit. It links changes to be achieved in services and systems with outcomes for those targeted by the programme. Through individual interviews and facilitated workshops the researchers, on behalf of the stakeholders, generate a statement which sets out:

1. The group being targeted for change.
2. The context in which the change programme is being delivered.
3. The long-term objectives sought.
4. Actions being taken to meet these objectives.
5. Anticipated short and medium-term outcomes which indicate progress towards long-term objectives.
6. Why actions will lead to outcomes.

Once this framework has been established it guides the evaluation activity: the questions that are asked and the issues that are explored. It enables researchers to review the extent to which outcomes achieved were those that were anticipated and thus whether the ‘theory’ underpinning the approach was robust. It also focuses attention on the extent to which the proposed strategy was implemented in the way that was intended.

ToC statements were generated for the two partnerships on the basis of interviews and a workshop (Site B) and interviews (Site A). In each case the drafted statement was fed back to stakeholders and agreed with them. We then agreed which services should be the focus of study.

In each case study site the data was collected over a period of up to 18 months, and was based on agreed statements about the strategies and intended short, medium and long-term outcomes of the services (the ‘Theory of Change’). These statements guided the type and nature of the data gathered, and the indicators adopted by the NECF. In Site A, three services and the work of the central Children's Fund partnership team were selected for detailed study. There were four funded services in this specific theme. In Site B, seven services were selected. There were up to 12 services funded in this theme.

Data collection involved the following:

**Site A**

Over the period November 2004 – October 2005 we undertook semi-structured interviews (including interviews with some respondents on more than one occasion) with:

- ten service providers (including project co-ordinators and staff, community representatives, mainstream leisure service providers);
- three members of local community forums/groups;
- eight Children's Fund strategic stakeholders (members of the central team, original steering group members, members of the Partnership Board);
focus groups/group interviews with a total of 54 children;
individual interviews with 15 children;
individual interviews with seven parents/carers.

Site B
Over the period November 2004 – October 2005 we undertook semi-structured interviews (including interviews with some respondents on more than one occasion) with:

- Seven service providers (including project co-ordinators and staff, community representatives, mainstream leisure service providers);
- Four Children’s Fund strategic stakeholders (members of the central team, original steering group members, members of the Partnership Board);
- Focus groups/group interviews with a total of seven children;
- Individual interviews with 15 children;
- Individual interviews with 19 parents/carers (including one foster carer).

The evaluation also used evidence drawn from local documents, reports, monitoring data and Local Evaluation reports in both case study sites.
Chapter 2: The Context and Key Issues

This chapter describes some of the issues and difficulties facing black and minority ethnic children and families. It summarises the context of racism, the links between social exclusion and racism, the educational experiences of black and minority ethnic children and the existing knowledge about prevention and social care services for black and minority ethnic children.

Racism as context

Evaluation of service development and provision with and for black and minority ethnic communities has to be set within the context of key events that frame service development and delivery, some of which are discussed below:

Stephen Lawrence Inquiry and Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000

The public inquiry into the racist murder of Stephen Lawrence introduced into the public domain the concept of ‘institutional racism’:

The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture, or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people.

(Macpherson, 1999, p28)

While not a new concept, what was significant was the role this concept would play in shaping one of the most significant pieces of anti-racist legislation, the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. The report identified that while individuals did display prejudice, the failure to act appropriately resulted from cumulative systematic neglect. The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry, the Lawrence family’s campaign and the introduction of the concept of ‘institutional racism’ into mainstream policy thinking, created the conditions whereby the normal everyday routines and systems within organisations, including schools, social services and hospitals could be the legitimate focus for investigation. This has introduced an anti-racist perspective into mainstream thinking, especially the idea that racial frames of reference are sedimented into the normal practices of everyday life and are not just aberrations of individual prejudice.

One value of this shift in understanding is that if the problem of racism lies predominantly in the organisational cultures that affect much of our lives, then a policy focus on assimilating black and minority ethnic communities into the host (white) community is made problematic. Also, the anti-racist perspective questions various kinds of mentoring initiatives that tend to locate problems of behaviour, school attendance, service use, and exclusion as largely individual in nature. The
anti-racist perspective stresses how racism is a product of particular histories, embedded in everyday practices, and involves the stereotyping of social groups.

The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 places a positive duty to combat discrimination on all public bodies, including schools, social service departments, health services, as well as the police. This positive duty involves organisations conducting a race equality audit of their systems, structures and practices in order to identify whether particular groups are disproportionately affected. An example of this would be the requirement that schools examine whether behaviour management strategies, assessment systems, pastoral systems, and teaching and learning strategies have a disproportionate impact on different groups of pupils. For instance, there is evidence that African Caribbean pupils are disproportionately placed in lower examination streams (Warren, 2005). The Act would require schools to examine what processes were bringing about this outcome. Having conducted an audit of practice, organisations would then need to outline an action plan and a review mechanism. This audit, plan, review process would be continuous. However, recent reviews by, for example, the Audit Commission (Audit Commission, 2004) suggest that there is little progress in implementing the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. This should be a matter of concern in the context of the reconfiguration of children and family services, and the complex process of creating integrated services.

Racism or social exclusion?

*Segregation, poverty, discrimination and exclusion*

The focus on segregation bypasses the correlation between economic deprivation and residential patterns. In other words, those living in the most segregated areas are drawn from the poorest sections of society. More than 50% of African-Caribbean and Africans and over 33% of South Asians live in districts with the highest rates of unemployment. Only one in 20 live in an area of low unemployment compared with one in five of white people. Patterns of income distribution also tend to reflect those of black and minority ethnic density. Although Chinese people and Indians tend to have higher levels of income compared to African, Bangladeshi and Pakistani people, this association tends to decline if they live in areas of high black and minority ethnic density. Because of historical patterns of migration and settlement, Britain’s minority ethnic population are concentrated in the main urban areas. This geographical patterning of black and minority ethnic communities is also associated with patterns of segregation, with white people tending to live in areas with low black and minority ethnic density (Dorset, 1998). These patterns are geographically
differentiated. For instance, in the West Midlands, African Caribbean communities tend to be situated in areas of high black and minority ethnic density whereas Indian and African-Asian Hindus tend to be more dispersed. These patternings are not the result of voluntary action on the part of different communities, which the segregation thesis might suggest. Rather, they are a product of the history of colonialism, post-war labour recruitment policies and discriminatory practice by housing and mortgage providers (Lee and Murie, 1997; Somerville and Steele, 2002). Spatial segregation and differences in housing tenure is therefore complex. Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities, such as those in Bradford, Burnley and Oldham, tend to live in owner-occupied terraced urban housing. Because of the particular patterns of family reunion these households tend to be multi-generational (Anwar, 1979). The consequence, especially in the context of deep structural economic transformation, is that these communities tend to live in the poorest housing, with few resources to improve their living conditions (Chahal, 2000). More recent evidence suggests that as Bangladeshi and Pakistani Muslims in Bradford, Burnley and Oldham improve their economic well-being they are able to break out of the circles of deprivation that constrain the majority of their communities to remain in poor quality housing (Phillips and Ratcliffe, 2002). This positive development, though limited, relates to evidence of there being greater social mobility than social exclusion or segregation theories suggest. For instance, there is evidence that although people living in poor areas find it difficult to improve their labour or housing market positions, when labour market conditions improve many are quickly able to integrate themselves back into mainstream society (Buck, 2001). There is a need, then, to distinguish between ‘people’ and ‘place’ poverty,

**Education**

The rationale for many Children's Fund funded projects supporting black and minority ethnic children arises from concerns that black and minority ethnic pupils gain less benefit than their white peers from improvements in educational attainment (Bhattacharyya, *et al.*, 2003; Gillborn and Gipps, 1996; Gillborn and Mirza, 2000; OfSTED, 1996; Warren and Gillborn, 2003). However, the pattern of attainment by minority ethnic students is considerably more complex than is widely recognised. Chinese and Indian pupils achieve significantly above average results at each stage of education, whereas black Caribbean, mixed parentage, Travellers, Bangladeshi and Pakistani pupils achieve significantly below average results at the end of compulsory education (GCSE). A consultation document from the DfES, *Aiming High: Raising the Achievement of Minority Ethnic Pupils* (DfES, 2003b), supports the
growing body of evidence that school-based processes are an important contributory factor in the production of poor outcomes for black and minority ethnic pupils. It draws attention to the way the normal processes and practices of schooling can produce discriminatory effects. For example, there is abundant evidence of the discriminatory impact of behaviour management practices in schools (Audit Commission, 1999; Blair, 2001; OfSTED, 1996; Osler, 1997). Black and minority ethnic pupils are vastly over-represented in school exclusion figures, particularly African Caribbean pupils. This is despite the fact that Local Education Authorities (LEAs) and schools have been provided with evidence and guidance on this matter. Since the publication of the report ‘Recent Research on the Achievements of Ethnic Minority Pupils’ (Gillborn and Gipps, 1996), there has been growing official concern about the number of black students excluded by schools (OfSTED, 1996; Osler, 1997; SEU, 1998). Since then a knowledge-base of research has been available to teachers and education administrators to understand in more detail the processes that lead to the disproportionate presence of black students in the exclusions figures (OfSTED, 1996; Hayden, 1997; Audit Commission, 1999; Osler, et al., 2001; Pomeroy, 2000). LEAs and schools have also been provided with a range of authoritative guidance on how to manage the exclusion process (OfSTED, 2001).

The general experience of black and minority ethnic pupils is of being over-regulated and over-disciplined. The evidence strongly suggests that black and minority ethnic pupils are simply treated differently and more harshly than their white peers (see Warren, 2005).

There could be a problem, then, in dominant conceptualisations of social exclusion. Some critiques of social exclusion theories have argued that the use of such terms as ‘risk’ and ‘risk factors’ work on the basis that there are certain characteristics of individuals or groups that predispose them to behaviours that lead to social exclusion (Dwyer and Wyn, 2001; Kelly, 2001; Kelly and Kenway, 2001). In particular these strategies are viewed as needing categories of people to be defined as ‘at risk’, as experiencing particular deficits, in order to make them the targets of policy intervention. There is a danger that black and minority ethnic communities are identified, by virtue of their ethnicity, as ‘at risk’ and therefore requiring interventions. In the context where issues of segregation are predominant in policy development, such interventions can define the problem as being the lack of integration into mainstream society. The evidence we have outlined above points in a very different direction – to that of structures and processes that may be barriers to participation. Consequently, interventions can be dominated by forms of mentoring that attempt to
manage the process of bringing black and minority ethnic communities back into the mainstream.

**Supplementary schools**

One significant response to this collective experience of discrimination by African Caribbean communities has been the supplementary school movement (Nehaul, 1996; Reay and Mirza, 1997). Supplementary, voluntary or ‘Saturday’ schools organised from within mainly African Caribbean communities have to be understood as a political response to the experience of racism and discrimination in the mainstream education service. This is mirrored in community self-help initiatives in many areas of social provision where the mainstream ‘white’ services are perceived to be discriminatory in their practices (see Ahmed (2004) for a discussion of this). Despite more recent attempts to co-opt these schools within the embrace of ‘partnership’ between statutory bodies and the voluntary and community sector, these schools have been offering a critique of mainstream education for the past 40 years (Reay and Mirza, 1997; Stone, 1981). They question the assumption in much segregation and social exclusion theories of cultural deficit within black and minority ethnic communities. In their stead they provide empirical evidence of positive social action, often on the part of black mothers, who are often denigrated within popular representations of black communities. In general, these schools do not represent a desire for separate (segregated) education. Rather they capture a desire to succeed within the mainstream system.

**Community responses**

However, supplementary schools, as with the majority of the black and minority ethnic voluntary and community sector, face critical issues of sustainability and organisational capacity (Craig, *et al.*, 2002; McLeod, *et al.*, 2001; Oc, *et al.*, 1997; Public Sector Management Unit, 1985; Voluntary and Community Sector Commission Birmingham, 2004). This issue is highlighted further in the context of partnership approaches to regeneration and tackling social exclusion. Evidence points to a number of recurring themes. Despite the concentration of black and minority ethnic communities in regeneration areas, these are the very communities that are under-represented in regeneration partnerships. (McLeod *et al* 2001) This can lead to priority issues regularly identified by black and minority ethnic communities – racism, community safety, and housing not being represented in the objectives of regeneration and inclusion initiatives. Indeed, black and minority ethnic voluntary and community organisations tend to be regarded as service providers
rather than partners. This is hampered by the perception that the black and minority ethnic voluntary and community sector is comprised of small, informal and poorly funded organisations. A large scale study of the black and minority ethnic voluntary and community sector has revealed that 90% have legal status and half of these have annual incomes of between £50,000 - £250,000. However, lack of access to long-term core funding does present problems in terms of sustainability and the capacity to engage in partnership structures and the ‘contract’ and ‘bidding’ culture associated with regeneration and inclusion initiatives (McLeod, et al., 2001).

**Prevention and preventative social care services**

The development and take-up of preventative services by black and minority ethnic children and families have been explored by a relatively small number of research studies compared to the literature exploring the use of formal social care procedures, As Ahmed notes in her literature review for NECF:

> The studies on access to preventative services also note the social circumstances of black and minority children. Risk and vulnerability are manifested in the high numbers of children in the ‘looked after system’ (African Caribbean and mixed race children), and significant rates of South Asian children who are referred for child protection concerns, particularly physical abuse. The research suggests that children’s rapid entry into public care indicates a clear lack of preventative work with families. (Ahmed, 2004, pp50-51)

There is an established body of literature that describes and analyses the over-representation of black and minority ethnic children in interventionist social care provision (see for example, Thoburn, 2004). This pattern of over-representation is carried into adulthood and can be seen within the mental health and criminal justice systems (Prior and Paris, 2005). However, far less is known about the role and effectiveness of preventative services for black and minority ethnic children and families.

The research that has been undertaken (see for example, Box and Butt, 1998) describes issues of both accessibility and relevance as being barriers to the take-up of services. It is suggested that black and minority ethnic children and families are under-represented in the use of informal preventative provision. However, the limited understandings of ‘prevention’ and ‘preventative services’ used by mainstream providers also means a rich and diverse range of small-scale localised provision has been under-recognised and explored. The decision by Children’s Fund partnerships to place an emphasis on service development for black and minority ethnic children
opened up important learning opportunities for practitioners and policy makers, some of which is captured in this report.
Chapter 3: Strategies and Objectives

This chapter describes the reasons and assumptions that led to the strategies adopted by the case study sites. The emerging common characteristics are discussed. The intended outcomes of the strategies are also considered.

The rationales for the service development

In this chapter we consider the underpinning reasons and assumptions in each of the case study sites for the development of the services. Site A developed a rationale for black and minority ethnic preventative services that responded particularly to the experiences of African Caribbean boys. The rationale recognised the specific difficulties experienced by this group and sought to use community-based knowledge and provision to develop the Children's Fund partnership’s approach:

As part of the initial delivery plan XXX chose to develop themed approaches to services to particular children – including black and minority ethnic children. The rationale for the themed services was to ensure accessible responsive services were developed that met the particular needs of targeted children. Existing services were seen to hold many barriers to meeting the needs of these groups of children, and in failing to promote the well-being of these children.

The primary needs for the African Caribbean children were linked to educational engagement and attainment. The key strategy adopted was ‘community inclusion’ – that is that the communities in which the children live would be best placed to drive forward and sustain the development of appropriate services.

(From Site A ToC statement)

Site B, whilst also supporting a themed approach to black and minority ethnic children, did not focus on a particular group within this theme. The rationale of Site B placed an emphasis on education, set within a context of family and community support:

In order to achieve our long-term objectives of both improved educational outcomes for, and improved well-being of, black and minority ethnic children and young people we will work to build on existing practice and support innovation within the following broad outcome headings:

1. Raise the educational attainment of children from BME groups
2. Broaden experience, raise skills and confidence
3. Support families
4. Improve community cohesion
5. Change practice

(From Site B ToC statement)
A themed approach
The decision to adopt a themed approach within the Children's Fund partnerships was common to both case study sites. In both sites the early thinking that led to this approach was not clear, as this decision had already been made at the point of putting out initial plans for consultation and response. The early plans from the partnerships articulated the specific difficulties and problems faced by black and minority ethnic children, and this appears to underpin the rationale for developing targeted services. The failure of existing mainstream provision to meet the needs of black and minority ethnic children, and the understanding held by stakeholders that the specific needs of black and minority ethnic children required focused provision reinforced the themed approach. The Guidance produced centrally (CYPU, 2000) also indicated that themed services may be an appropriate way forward. This themed approach is reflected in the structures developed by the two partnerships – both sites rolled out service development under the umbrella of a specific black and minority ethnic task group/reference group.

Data gathered in the later stages of the evaluation begins to reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of such themed approaches, and these emerging questions are considered in the conclusion of this report.

The emphasis on education and learning
The rationales for both case study sites gave weight and importance to the need to improve educational outcomes for black and minority ethnic children. The case study sites shared an emphasis on education with recognition that black and minority ethnic children experienced particular barriers and challenges. The rationales for the provision of services adopted by both case study sites contained a belief that existing mainstream educational provision does not meet the needs of black and minority ethnic children, and that by experiencing failure in this area children’s future opportunities are curtailed. The strategies adopted sought to both enhance positive alternative learning experiences of black and minority ethnic children, and to supplement and extend their formal learning to enable effective progress within mainstream schooling. Neither of the strategies placed the emphasis on changing mainstream provision, instead the focus was on alternative supplementary provision and equipping individual children and their families with the skills needed to progress successfully through the mainstream.
The role of black and minority ethnic communities and community providers

The rationales for the services are clear that providers based within and drawn from the child’s community should shape and develop provision. This approach – set outside the mainstream formal education provision – is presented as holding the potential to meet the needs of black and minority ethnic children.

The role of the Black Community and Voluntary Sector (BCVS) was also identified as an important one in meeting communities’ needs, and a strength upon which to build. Although the sector is diverse and has a strong history of providing services for BOME communities, it was described as historically excluded from mainstream structures.

(Case Study Site B Outline Plan)

[Some case study site B material used the term BOME when referring to black and minority ethnic children and communities]

For both case study sites, the linking into local community based providers was presented as the opportunity to build upon existing strengths and expertise, and as means of ensuring services adequately reflected children’s needs and life experiences. The extent to which local community based provision had an infrastructure sufficient to meet the demands coming with Children’s Fund funding is not clear. The assumptions made by the Children’s Fund partnerships when working with local small-scale voluntary and community organisations is discussed elsewhere (see Edwards, et al., 2006). However, this issue has particular resonance for the black and minority ethnic voluntary sector and will be picked up within the concluding section of this report.

The strategies adopted

Although the case study sites adopted different strategies to take forward the rationales for the services, they held common characteristics. The strategies will be briefly described, and then the characteristics discussed.

In Site A, the decision was made to support a collective of black and minority ethnic community groups and community stakeholders to work up the detail of the strategy and take forward the planning process for the theme. The strategy focused on developing services specifically targeting African Caribbean boys. The emphasis was on supporting the development of learning, with the components being ‘formal’ additional education, family support, mentoring and creating opportunities for new experiences. Representatives of the collective had been involved in the development of the original rationale for the themed services. The development of this ‘community
inclusion’ approach is the source of highly contested accounts. The approach encountered significant problems. These were:

- The actual nature of the autonomy extended to the collective to assess the needs of the children in its communities and to devise the strategy for driving forward the services.
- The extent to which the community collective could drive forward the development of the strategy and simultaneously meet the regulatory and management requirements of the Children’s Fund.
- The assumptions made about the capacity of the collective to take on and support a large scale, complex attempt to address the needs of African Caribbean boys.
- The expectations that developed within the central Children’s Fund partnership team that the collective would respond to all black and minority ethnic-related requests for Children’s Fund support, rather than just those linked to the original rationale.
- The processes put in place to support the work and to ensure emerging learning fed into broader Children’s Fund developments.

The initial strategy – based on the community inclusion approach – collapsed, leaving in its wake much ill will and bitterness.

_Everyone who came forward looking for money for black boys, anything black it was like thrown in our direction. And I said, this is unworkable, you cannot do that, you risk totally trashing the plan. We’ve got key individuals here who again were totally… you know they’re not the usual suspects, they’re absolutely spot on. They’re skilled at every element and they were brought in for specific specialist skills. I said… I made it clear. I said it cannot work. There were people coming forward who said, oh we hear you’ve got a million pounds, we need £70,000 for this can you write us a cheque, and I said right. Again it was… and we were told, you have to work with these people. So you can imagine the uproar in everything else._

Following difficulties in the arrangements for taking forward the work, the central partnership team resumed management of the theme, but there was evidence that the rationale had been lost:

_What we had actually found, or when I came in post was that actually in terms of the original aims and the rationale that actually wasn’t the case. There was a whole band of small services delivering a whole hotch-potch of different things, because what it became, it became a small grant giving scheme._
The strategy that followed this collapse of the early arrangements moved away from the original rationale to become one of ensuring scrutiny, accountability and where possible the maintenance of a disparate group of services. However, after a process of review, the services that could be maintained did, in fact, continue to reflect some of the original rationale and strategy. In particular this included a focus on children’s experiences of learning and the promoting of culturally responsive provision.

In Site B, the decision was also made to involve black and minority ethnic community providers early on in the development of the strategy for the themed services. Existing community providers were asked to submit proposals for how they might take forward the aims for the theme. It was then decided that all those submitting a proposal that met a set of criteria based on the original rationale could be allocated funding. (This resulted in smaller amounts than anticipated being allocated but all proposals receiving some Children's Fund funding). The overall strategy included support for existing additional education, enhanced family support, creating new experiences and some – albeit limited – emphasis on working with mainstream provision to better meet the needs of black and minority ethnic children. As with Site A the uncertainty and change experienced nationally by the Children’s Fund impacted this strategy. At two different points in the life of the theme, services were subject to review and reduced funding – causing anxiety and concern.

In Site B, alongside the agreements for funding, was the development of a strategy for bringing together those developing the services. The aim was to enable shared learning and promote stronger representation of black and minority ethnic children’s needs within the wider local development of children’s services. This strategy has been maintained, and more recently this has been built on through the merging of Children’s Fund networks into local more generic black and minority ethnic networks as the need for integration and mainstreaming is addressed.

The strategies adopted by both case study sites relied heavily upon the existing black and minority ethnic community networks and providers. Both strategies sought to develop provision that went beyond formal schooling, and they gave limited attention to changing mainstream provision – or indeed to using mainstream providers as partners in driving the strategy.
The intended outcomes
The rationale and strategies originally adopted in each case study site had a number of intended outcomes in common:

- To secure enhanced formal educational attainment by black and minority ethnic children by providing additional learning opportunities that are based outside the mainstream school setting and are located within children’s communities.

- To enable new experiences for black and minority ethnic children that engaged them positively in learning and education and so helped children cope better with mainstream educational settings.

- To support children’s networks in helping their children navigate the formal education systems and so assist in achieving better educational outcomes for black and minority ethnic children.

- To build on and support community based provision to ensure that the services developed/supported accurately reflected the needs, heritage and experiences of black and minority ethnic children and offered disadvantaged families support and practical help.

- To balance the negative or absent mainstream black and minority ethnic images with positive cultural images and experiences that would enable children to grow in confidence and so assist children in coping with racism and oppression.

- To try to influence and change existing practices so as to achieve better services for black and minority ethnic children.

The strategies developed reflected these intended outcomes as they were driven by community based providers, with an emphasis on education set within a broader approach to supporting families and communities.

However, neither case study rationale suggested that existing mainstream provision was helpful or appropriate, despite aiming to equip individual children to progress
within formal education systems. The difficulties and contradictions caused by focusing on changing children rather than mainstream provision will be explored in the concluding section.

Summary points

• The two rationales of the case study sites demonstrated common characteristics; the emphasis on learning and education as key to pathways out of social exclusion, the drivers for the shaping of provision being within the black and minority ethnic communities rather than within existing mainstream provision and the development of separate, targeted/themed provision rather than an integrated approach based on geography (for example, specific wards) or nature of need (for example, children formally excluded from school)

• The rationales and strategies adopted, placed the emphasis on alternative supplementary educational provision and equipping individual children and their families with the skills needed to progress through the mainstream. The strategies gave limited attention to changing mainstream provision – the focus was on meeting the needs of the children through alternative services and opportunities

• The strategies adopted by both case study sites relied heavily upon existing black and minority ethnic community networks and providers to develop and drive forward the work of the Children's Fund. The capacity of the groups to meet these demands and expectations, without any pre-investment to ensure such roles were feasible, caused tension and some difficulty.

Both case study sites decided that the black and minority ethnic community groups and providers were best placed to take forward the strategies, rather than mainstream agencies. This is linked to the desire to develop culturally responsive services that are tailored to meet the needs of black and minority ethnic children and generate opportunities to use existing knowledge and expertise to develop provision.
Chapter 4: Implementation and Service Development

This chapter describes the services supported by the Children’s Fund in the two case study sites and looks in some detail at the individual aims and intended outcomes for the services. The practices supported by the services are also described. The low level of provision nationally and the limited funding of research in this area means little is known about preventative services for black and minority ethnic children. The Children’s Fund partnerships’ decisions to prioritise funding for black and minority ethnic focused preventative services has enabled new learning to be captured about prevention and preventative practices for this group of children.

The services

The services described have a number of common characteristics. Whilst the style of the actual delivery of the service may vary, there are shared features in the services studied:

- The support for informal learning opportunities. Almost all the services funded offered children, and in some cases families, access to new experiences and opportunities to learn new skills.

- Intentions to enhance children’s capacity to achieve better outcomes within the formal education systems.

- Recognition of, and responses to, the poverty and disadvantage experienced by black and minority ethnic families through support with childcare, opening up experiences usually unaffordable, and attempts to materially enhance existing provision.

- Basing service provision on shared cultural knowledge and experiences. All the services described provided culturally responsive services and aimed to promote positive cultural identity.

- A tension between supporting new services and enhancing existing provision. The former may facilitate take-up by children who have not historically accessed preventative services, however, achieving sustainability was experienced as challenging and difficult.

In Site A, the original strategy envisaged new services being developed to support and enhance existing community based services such as supplementary schools. The turbulence within the theme resulted in a diverse range of services receiving
short-term funding. After the management of the theme reverted to the Children's Fund partnership, a process of review resulted in four services securing ongoing funding, with three of these agreeing to participate in the evaluation. The services studied in detail by NECF were:

- An outreach mobile educational resource unit, which aimed to offer a mix of informal learning experiences and bridge building into mainstream library and educational resources (the Children's Fund was the sole funding stream).

- A community based drama and dance project, which offered opportunities to develop confidence and presentational skills – individually and as part of a group (this project was a multiple funded project).

- A community based horticultural project that offered children new opportunities to develop skills and enjoy learning. The project had links into local schools as well as community based links (originally Children's Fund funded but now multiple funded).

In Site B, the process of allocating funding meant a greater number of services were supported, and NECF was able to work with the following services:

- Children's Fund funding has supported the work of the ‘Children’s Team’ within a service for women who are victims of domestic violence and abuse. Specifically the Children's Fund has funded the after-school club, play schemes, and half of a dedicated ‘Children’s Resettlement Worker’ post. Half of the Children's Fund funding comes from the ‘black and minority ethnic’ theme and half from the ‘unsettled families’ theme (a different theme within the partnership that worked with families who were breaking up or experiencing difficulties); this is because a high proportion of service users are from black and minority ethnic families and communities.

- Children's Fund funding has supported the development of the ‘Education Liaison Worker’ (ELW) – a full-time post which aims to support children and young people who are underachieving at school. This is located within a service which is well established and aims to promote the health and well-being of South Asian people in the city. It offers a range of services for
children, young people, parents, families and older people which are culturally sensitive and appropriate. Users are involved in the planning, development and review of services and provision.

- Children’s Fund funding has supported a holiday play scheme for children and young people aged five to 13. This is set within a service that provides support for South Asian disabled children and their families across part of the city. The play scheme provides activities which are culturally sensitive and delivered in children’s chosen first language. The scheme provides outdoor and other activities that aim to raise self-esteem and confidence, and trips and excursions for families that aim to provide new experiences and help with caring.

- Funding and support for a supplementary school for black and minority ethnic children and young people living within a defined geographical area of the city. The school teaches maths, literacy and science, with lessons tied closely to the curriculum. It also runs holiday schemes and after-school provision and Children’s Fund funding enabled the Saturday school to begin again after a period without support.

- The funding of an after-school club and holiday scheme set within an Asian women’s group that has existed for 19 years. The profile of the area means that local families suffer from high levels of poverty and disadvantage associated with low incomes. The need for out-of-school provision, which was linked to education and play, was identified. The work aims to raise educational attainment and attendance and increase confidence and skills through the provision of structured play and informal learning.

- Funding for a supplementary school that, prior to the Children’s Fund, was insecure and depended entirely upon volunteers. The support of the Children’s Fund has enabled the employment of a Head Teacher, the development of materials, and the renting of premises. The project targets children who have African and African/Caribbean heritage, but it is open to all local children. It is a ‘Higher Attainment and Pastoral Care Project’, which seeks to extend the academic attainment of black students through the provision of tuition in maths, literacy, science, cultural studies and music.
Lessons are tied closely to the national curriculum but draw on African and black culture.

- Children’s Fund funding has enabled a full-time Activity Co-ordinator to be employed, set within an existing youth and family support project. The project works in a participatory way with children, young people and their families to identify, plan, develop and review activities and provision. Families who self-identify as in need can access the service independently.

A number of common themes arise from the analysis of the data gathered about the services:

**Enhancing provision/supporting new services**

Both case study sites supported a diverse range of services aimed at addressing the needs of black and minority ethnic children. However, Site A placed an emphasis on funding new services and the support in Site B focused on enhancing existing provision. These different approaches to implementation revealed different strengths and weaknesses. Whilst the new services could work from the outset within the Children’s Fund objectives, they were fewer in number with a greater number of services having funding withdrawn than in the Site B, which focused on enhancing existing provision. However, supporting existing projects meant that not all these services were able to articulate a specific Children’s Fund dimension – and there is evidence that some projects simply saw the Children's Fund as a grant-giving scheme. These different approaches to implementation also rested on assumptions within the partnerships about the capacity of the black and minority ethnic groups and communities to meet the requirements of the Children’s Fund and to support the development of the services.

Using existing providers allowed pre-existing infrastructures to be built upon; supporting new services placed extra demands on capacity building – with the resultant risk that services could not be maintained. However, as discussed elsewhere in NECF findings, linking with existing providers can mean that the capacity for innovation and change is reduced.

There is also evidence that established services built upon work with children and families who already knew about the project. The services that gained additional funding via the Children’s Fund were able to enhance existing activity, which built
upon work with children and families who already used the services in some way:

...obviously the family already knew me which was a real help because they knew
who I was and they know the support that I could give but in a different capacity now
(Education Liaison Worker about working with a family who she already knew from
the organisation’s play scheme).

The fieldwork undertaken by NECF gathered evidence that the ‘new’ services did
eourage children who previously had had limited access to preventative services to
take up opportunities.

Influencing the mainstream
There was a shared tension within the case study strategies about the attention given
to supporting additional provision and the attention given to changing mainstream
provision. Whilst the data gathered illustrated the commitment by the Children's Fund
partnerships to work with and build upon community strengths and knowledge to
meet children’s needs, the extent to which services developed the capacity to change
and influence the mainstream to improve outcomes was less evident. The services
studied by NECF focused their attention on meeting the needs of the children and
families who were the target of the provision. Whilst some providers were able to
identify a link into the mainstream, the majority of services described minimal, if any,
activity aimed at changing mainstream provision. One play centre suggested that, by
using the mobile outreach education service:

*I mean if we can get XXX coming at least once a fortnight if not once a week,
you know, I think it’s got to be beneficial to the kids because then we can start
getting into... well where’s XXX from then? XXX is from the library, let’s get
into the library……We can build bridges that way and then go off to the
library and see XXX in work at the library or the other people up there. So
that's what we're hoping to do.*

Developing culturally responsive services
All the services studied by NECF placed considerable emphasis on their capacity to
provide services that positively reflected the children’s culture and heritage. The
services built upon knowledge held by those leading and working within the service
and drew heavily on historical knowledge about the communities that were the target
of the services.

*XXX and co were doing a lot of research around the needs of black boys
failing in schools. And of course I’m also vice chair of a governing body of the
school and I thought, I do have concerns as well. And as a black parent as*
well, so we can put the whole thing in together and let’s put the needs of these boys on the map. Its emerging data, everything there is backing it up.

The evidence about the extent to which this expertise and knowledge was being ‘cascaded’ out from the service into other providers working with black and minority ethnic children was mixed. There was evidence of some services helping to broaden understandings about specific cultures and faiths, other services had few links outside the communities they served.

Service development

Engagement with families

There has been mixed experience of engaging families across the various projects. Service providers pointed to a particular reason for this – for many working families becoming involved in projects aimed at their children is difficult due to time constraints. Families are described by the projects as seeing the service as providing a type of respite care for their children. They knew that their children would be safe and occupied, and they were able to work without worry.

…a lot of people are still at work…and then if you see them, they come to the play centre, grab the kids and… you know it’s come to the play centre and they want to get away home, get sorted out everything they need to do at home. So yeah it’s difficult.

A parent said: I have been invited a few times but because I work it is difficult to get up there. However, there was still a wish to try and engage families through providing input for parents at some of the projects.

…but linking up with the black families reading project, which is targeting families all the time would be a way into families so that you’re not actually doing so much work with the groups of children within their play centres, but actually going to family or community events. Sort of going to different community centres where parents would be as well and linking in with the sort of basic skills and stuff like that that parents might be taking advantage of. So there are ways in but we haven’t actually started those yet.

Working with poverty

Many of those involved in providing services talked about the impact of poverty on African Caribbean children and families, and more generally on all families living in deprived areas.

…but some children won’t have that money to get towards it so they won’t be able to experience the trip that is for fun, learning or whatever purpose… But
at [Saturday school], most of the trips they do is for free so everyone can go for the learning experience...

Many many parents are on income support as well, and we know that even when we ask 50p some people don’t give it. But if they can they can. We do provide snacks during the day. And we pick them up and drop them off as well, but that’s nowhere near covering the cost

The links between families living in poverty and parents’ ability to become involved in projects was clear. As already described, parents have to work, often for long hours, and saw projects as a way of gaining a little extra childcare time at no extra cost and where they also knew that their children would be safe. Service providers and project workers were aware of this link and knew that their projects played a vital role for whole families.

**Funding and resources**

There was insufficient funding available to many of the services studied by NECF. This impacted resources in terms of staffing, equipment and the ability to provide activities. Services often relied on unpaid volunteers who could have committed more if they were offered paid work. One volunteer spoke of the difficulty of being involved in the long term with no prospect of being paid for his time.

…there is so much potential but it's just a matter of... you see at the end of the day what it is, is that we need funding... We need money that people like myself can be paid, you know... I am not getting paid for this, you know, I mean it’s just ridiculous. I mean I am spending so much time trying to help the community, help the kids and I'm trying to look for full-time work myself... it’s just ridiculous.

If the volunteers were not available this affected the children. Children said: The thing that has not been so good this week was that the staff of the project did not turn up.

Lack of resources made running projects difficult and limited the impact they were able to make. Service providers pointed out that many of the service users were living in poverty and already had limited opportunities, and that resources were sorely needed:

I’m running on no resources, it’s just fee income and I need people that can come in and parents have come in and said they want to do computer work with me. I’ve got somebody that said they’re going to be my cook, so I’m working on... and I don’t know when I’m going to get paid (laughs) I really don’t know when I’m going to get paid.
There was evidence that restricted funding could impact on opportunities to reach the most marginalised of children. One education liaison worker was particularly frustrated by the lottery’s refusal to fund the boys group and the delay created by having to re-apply as she felt that the local (known) boys who have been pestering her for this group have recruited other boys who they are hanging round with who are quite hard to reach young boys who are interested in it as well.

**Practices and activities**

The data also offers learning about practice and innovative approaches to engaging children. By ‘practice’ we mean the skills, approaches and methods adopted by those working with the children. The success or failure of the projects and services evaluated commonly rested on the specific skills and attributes brought to the service by project staff (who would often be solo staff working with volunteers). The services and projects often provided examples of staff with unique collections of talents – drawing on their own life experiences as well as the training and knowledge they had acquired.

The following practices were observed and experienced as helpful:

*Workers who were able to work flexibly and creatively to engage children*

The personal skills and attributes of workers involved in the projects were major factors in achieving positive outcomes for children across the projects. Particular attributes that were highlighted as important when working with children were the workers’ own confidence, flexibility, enthusiasm and the ability to build confidence in the children.

So if X comes in and wants to do stories they might turn round to (him) and say, we don't want to do stories tonight, can we go and play football.

You've got to show enthusiasm yourself, yeah. A lot of them in areas like the defined areas, I can see in the children, not the really young ones but the older, you know my age group, when they're around 10, 11, some of them are a bit lethargic like it takes a lot to motivate them unless they've got something they want to do themselves.

...the vehicle and the resources and (the worker) together provided role model to the club, provided opportunities and insight into libraries that they may not have had before. And in terms of confidence...he's brought out their own abilities and actually reinforced the fact that they are worthwhile things. He's a role model because he's made something of his life and been successful in his past life and now. So the whole thing I think has sort of boosted how they felt about themselves and has been...so really successful.
Parents also valued workers and felt that their attitudes and approaches with children often made a big difference to behaviour.

*I think it was more the quality and the support he was getting. That was the most essential thing really. I thought at that time that probably he needed a role model and that was important for him and I know what he didn't get as a child, in terms of a father role so I know that X could be that support and role model.*

*it’s amazing how much work they can produce, you know you get the best out of a child when he’s got one to one with someone he’s comfortable with.*

**Staff or volunteers who reflected the cultural backgrounds, knowledge and understandings of the children**

A further dimension of practice that was experienced as helpful was the use of workers who reflected the ethnicity and cultural backgrounds of those they were working with:

*I do feel that what he’s doing is bringing in cultural things which I cannot bring, and that is really good because that gives the children an aim to say, well my mum came from there, where did she come from, what happened in her lifetime, and that give him an earmark to go to.*

*[CF worker’s] been a huge support to me coming on home visits with me, obviously for the language barrier, and just the cultural knowledge that she has.*

**Using events and activities that were aimed at providing a positive view of children’s cultures whilst promoting new learning opportunities**

The services used a range of activities to provide new opportunities, which also aimed to promote the children’s cultural heritage in a positive way. Alongside this was the teaching of cultural and religious subjects to extend the children’s knowledge and understanding of their histories and faiths.

In order to provide positive experiences service providers pointed out that they actively used resources that would reflect positive images and role models for children. This was seen as a different opportunity for the children, who often did not have access to this sort of material.

*Subjects that I don’t have in school they teach me, like about my culture and my background and stuff which helped me.*

*…and we’re doing a topic on what was happening in Africa during the Tudor period in Ghana. And one of the boys, his father was from Ghana and he went into that getting information and there was no problem, no disruptiveness. And he’s getting something positive about himself. And they’re seeing positive images*
about part of their heritage rather than having these negative images about themselves which is going to do nothing to enhance their academic achievements in the classroom.

**Ongoing consultation with the children and communities using the projects**

Children and young people have made input into the services at a number of different levels. This has included making suggestions for the practical arrangements for the service.

There is also a wish to keep expanding service user involvement as service providers have found that they are able to provide better and more responsive services as a result.

...you see as time goes on you develop more what they really want, what they're benefiting from you get a clearer picture of what is best for them. At the moment it's a lot of trying things out and...I think it probably would have developed more user led service...and as the networks grow and the contacts grow and the links with the community, that would obviously grow at the same time.

They will say if they want something, you know we're not providing this service, and they want us to organise something, you know that's what we're there for.

**Promoting the projects within the communities who will use them so they are seen as useful resources**

Some of the services were successful at maintaining a profile in local areas and across the city. Projects became known about largely through word of mouth within communities. He just called...yes he contacted me and asked me whether I'd like to be involved. And of course I mean I always want to be involved in what's going on in the community.

One of the service providers was adept at ensuring the media were interested in the project and in getting ongoing publicity through local radio, newspapers and television. During the course of the research a healthy living day was held at the projects’ allotments. Many people attended (estimated 2000 - 3000) ensuring a high profile for the project.

We have worked hard locally through the XXX Youth and Play Partnership to increase and coordinate provision for children and young people locally, and we now have a strong partnership of voluntary and statutory groups working to increase opportunities for all local children and young people.
Summary points

Both case study sites supported a diverse range of services aimed at addressing the needs of black and minority ethnic children. However, Site A placed an emphasis on funding new services, and the support in Site B focused on enhancing existing provision. These different approaches to implementation revealed different strengths and weaknesses. Whilst the new services could work from the outset within the Children’s Fund objectives, they were fewer in number with a greater number of services having funding withdrawn than in Site B, which focused on enhancing existing provision. However, supporting existing projects meant that not all these services were able to articulate a specific Children’s Fund dimension – and there is evidence that some projects simply saw the Children’s Fund as a grant-giving scheme.

The evaluation of the services funded and developed by the partnerships suggests a number of shared characteristics:

- There were ongoing tensions between enhancing existing provision and developing new provision. This had implications for sustainability, take-up and accessibility

- Using existing providers allowed pre-existing infrastructures to be built upon; supporting new services placed extra demands on capacity building – with the resultant risk that services could not be maintained. However, as discussed elsewhere in NECF findings, linking with existing providers can mean that the capacity for innovation and change is reduced.

- There is also evidence that established services built upon work with children and families who already knew about the project. The services that gained additional funding via the Children’s Fund were able to enhance existing activity, which built upon work with children and families who already used the services in some way. The fieldwork undertaken by NECF gathered evidence that the ‘new’ services did encourage children to take up opportunities who previously had had limited access to preventative services.

- The evidence suggests a mixed picture of participation. Individual projects were working to include children and families in the development of the
services, but hard-pressed parents found it difficult to find time to become involved. More broadly there was less evidence of child and family involvement in the strategic development of services.

- All the services placed a value – as did the central Children’s Fund partnerships – on building on community and local knowledge to support culturally responsive services.

- Common issues in the development of the services included: how best to engage families given the demands on family life, the extent to which poverty was a dominant characteristic of children’s lives and the impact of limited funding and resources on the quality of the services.

A number of practices were observed and experienced as helpful and beneficial. These included: workers who were able to work flexibly and creatively to engage children, staff or volunteers who reflected the cultural backgrounds, knowledge and understandings of the children, using events and activities that were aimed at providing a positive view of children’s cultures whilst stimulating new learning opportunities, ongoing consultation with the children and communities using the projects, and promoting the projects within the communities who will use them so they are seen as useful resources.
Chapter 5: Impact

This chapter considers the experiences and effects of the services provided. The data gathered by NECF addresses the short-term and, in some cases, the medium-term outcomes for children and families using the services. Children’s experiences of the services and views of the services have been gathered alongside the accounts of professionals and family members. However, the life-span of both the services and the evaluation means that little if any long-term data could be obtained. A contributing factor to the absence of long-term data was the limited processes within services for capturing ‘hard’ indicators such as formal educational attainment. Children’s accounts of their experiences and perspectives of the services are presented as valid evidence of short and medium-term outcomes (Barnes, et al., 2004). Outcome evidence generated by others linked to the children (professionals, family members) is therefore woven into the data gathered from children.

Overview

The outcomes and experiences described by children, their networks and the providers can be grouped into the following categories:

- Opportunities to enjoy new experiences and avoid troublesome activities.
- Opportunities to develop individual and family confidence in abilities and capacities.
- Opportunities to see and experience cultural history and identity as positive and rich.
- Opportunities to engage in and enjoy ‘non-traditional’ learning.
- Opportunities to acquire enhanced learning linked to potential mainstream attainment.
- Opportunities to develop an enhanced sense of community and citizenship.
- Opportunities for fun and enjoyment.

It is apparent from the above groups of outcomes that the read across to the Every Child Matters outcomes can easily be made – outcomes such as enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and staying safe, clearly run through the categories of outcomes and experiences identified above. This will be further discussed in the concluding chapter. As already discussed the grouping of outcomes
captured by NECF does not include formal educational attainment – NECF was unable to capture any data that tracked changes in educational outcomes for black and minority ethnic children as measured by formal attainment. Discussion of this ‘gap’ is taken forward in the concluding chapter, but its significance needs to be noted in this section of the report.

**Opportunities to acquire enhanced learning linked to potential mainstream attainment**

Both case study sites had a strong emphasis on improving the educational outcomes for black and minority ethnic children and young people. In Site B, this meant a combination of formal supplementary education tied closely to the national curriculum aimed at supporting children in achieving at school, and the provision of more informal learning, which was play or activity based. In Site A, the focus was on informal learning and bridge building into the take-up of mainstream provision. A number of the services studied in Site B focused on teaching linked to the national curriculum to enhance children’s progress through mainstream education. The services targeted specific groups of children for whom a culturally responsive service was developed in order to support educational attainment. Data reflecting the impact of this approach on formal educational attainment in the mainstream was not available. However, children and families reported high satisfaction:

> I improve on every subject… and my teacher’s been saying that I’ve been coming to supplementary school, I’ve been improving.

> … like doing my spelling test here I got 16 out of 25 and when I done it at school I only had about ten out of 35 and then I done it here, and then when I done it next time I got most of them right.

**Opportunities to engage in and enjoy ‘non-traditional’ learning**

> They kind of mix play in with learning so it sticks in your head and sometimes we would have a game but it’s actually making us learn something, but you don’t realise until they tell you after. So she kind of disguises work a lot sometimes to make it more exciting.

The data showed evidence of new opportunities to address poor educational experiences and offer different and positive learning experiences to children and young people. Some of the services had an explicit or implicit aim of delivering opportunities that helped children to enjoy learning and used various practices and approaches to achieve this outcome. There was some evidence from the services that children and young people felt that they were experiencing new opportunities
and were learning. However, it is not clear whether this translated into improved formal educational outcomes in the medium to long-term. In some cases in the short term, it did appear that the children’s involvement in the services had meant that they were struggling less in the classroom.

In one project children identified newly acquired skills in gardening, cooking, food preparation and health and safety skills. They talked about how they had developed knowledge about plants and how to care for them, and learning in relation to different aspects of safety: *I get to see the things growing and it teaches stuff…About the plants and how they germinate and things like that. And they also teach you what type of beans and what the seeds look like.*

Service providers highlighted knowledge and skills developed through the projects and saw this learning as potentially giving young people an advantage in the future.

…. *I think it has actually introduced the children to thinking about how things grow, that you don’t just go to the supermarket and get stuff. The reality of it, even though you may do it in class, the reality of actually seeing it happen in the field I think is good for them.*

A learning mentor talked about educational outcomes for children involved with the project and indicated that it helped in all areas of their learning: *They’re seeing the growing. It is helping them with their literacy, with their numeracy, with their science to help them to understand.*

In some cases learning was one-off, but through the diaries children compiled for NECF a build-up of knowledge can be seen. These also provided evidence of children developing a sense of the importance of sustained activity.

**Opportunities to develop individual and family confidence in abilities and capacities**

Many of the children talked about how there had been changes for them in their ability to relate to others and make friends as a result of their involvement in the services.

One girl talked about the changes for her since joining a project, as she had been very shy. She did not mix well at school, and was said to be a likely target for bullying at secondary school. This had improved since she had become involved with the project. She did not seem to feel that this was a very important change, but if her
ability to understand and in turn relate to others had been enhanced, this was likely to have a significant impact at a later stage.

*I have learned more about what other people are talking about…the only thing that changed is that I think I do more and I understand what they’re talking about like at school…everyone…When people are talking, because before I didn’t really understand what they were talking about.*

Some of the children involved clearly experienced a sense of achievement, which directly related to how they felt about themselves. This indicated some rise in levels of confidence.

*It made me feel proud because we have done so much.*

*It’s a challenge but I like to do it, I like to get challenged…Like being up on stage and performing I’ve got more confidence in front of other people.*

*I’m more confident to talk to people and get on with more teachers.*

*I’ve kind of got to like more reading and got braver through coming to Saturday school*

*I think it’s very good. My daughter was very shy… and it gave her more self-confidence.*

Service providers also commented on how young people involved in projects had developed in terms of confidence.

*we have seen [girl] go from somebody with very low self-esteem and self-confidence to a lovely young lady. Yes she’s still got the learning difficulties but to look at her she’s just grown and blossomed into a lovely mature self-confident young lady.*

**Opportunities to enjoy new experiences and avoid troublesome activities**

Involvement in some of the services had changed children’s behaviour, and made them think about different ways to behave at school and at home. There was evidence that children’s behaviour had improved as a result of being involved in some of the services. In one service the provider made explicit his intention to provide alternative opportunities: *If you take away the gun then you must offer something else.*

The data gathered from this service usefully illustrates the multiple outcomes beginning to be achieved. Within this service children talked about how they had changed in terms of learning different skills, trying out different things and behaving
differently. Although this does not necessarily mean that there will be a long-term effect in terms of diversion from anti-social behaviour, the children had begun to think about how taking up new opportunities provided them with a different and possibly better experience.

*I was very naughty and I was getting bored of schoolwork. I have learnt about planting vegetables and digging out weeds. My behaviour has changed because if I am not good then Mr X (learning mentor) will not let me go.*

*Sometimes I got out of my seat, walk around and not concentrate on my work...I have learnt how to do gardening.*

Children also talked about changes at home; and benefits for themselves and other members of the family. Parents also felt that changes had occurred in their children. Staff from schools involved in the service also felt that the behaviour of children involved had changed as a result of being involved, with children becoming calmer as a result.

*... it’s a learning environment but it’s out of school and I think a lot of the things that they learn, a lot of the way of working together, that they actually learn in that situation they can carry on in school. And definitely I think it has impacted on their behaviour...without a doubt I think that it has had a positive impact on them, a calming... the idea of actually working together without fighting and without pushing and taking turns and those sorts of things I think has been positive.*

Data gathered also indicates that children were learning to develop the ability to relate to adults in a respectful way. This is seen as a positive change in behaviour for many of the children involved.

*I mean they’re respectful to the people at the project...one of the children was saying today we have to make sure that when we’re out in the project that we listen and we do as we’re told...I think they know that they’re not teachers but they are very respectful and that is quite important isn’t it...I think the fact that they are actually learning something from them, you know, has an impact. ...I think it is because they see them as teachers... in a sense that they are people who are imparting knowledge to them...*

There is some evidence to suggest that children have translated what they have learnt to different situations, and that this has impacted on their lives at home and relationships with parents as well as at school.

*When she comes back she is very positive, very very positive, which with the other group she wasn’t. She is very positive and she is very happy and she*
doesn’t misbehave. …… And when she starts the school on a Monday it is on a happier, positive note.

Communication is said to have improved both in school and between children and their parents as a result of being involved in the service.

I’m just trying to think of a comment that one of the parents made to me and she said to me that her daughter is more eager to help with the shopping, eager to help in the kitchen. She’s finding it easier to talk… finding it easier to communicate with the children…we have parents coming in and working with the children in this project and they’re working with the local community. So it makes them better citizens, it prepares them to be better citizens. And I think that is the greatest impact here, it’s the citizenship.

It is also a very, very, very great stress relief. It is therapeutic. So mum and the… the parents and the children have been relaxed once they’ve done, they’re calmer. So it’s easier to communicate.

Children and young people talked positively about involving their parents or carers in the service, and could talk about what they did with their families: The children were so happy. That was the first time ever after six years that I went out somewhere with my children.

Opportunities to see and experience cultural history and identity as positive and rich

Those involved with both direct delivery and overall service provision talked about some positive outcomes as a result of access to culturally relevant and positive resources for children. One of the services had provided the opportunity for children and their families to access books promoting positive images of black people, and had described the limits of existing mainstream provision:

… I think with the black children if they know there are these books around and they’re going to be available in the library, yeah they would go to the library, yeah. I think part of the reason why they don’t is because the library is still a white establishment, there’s nothing there for them, if you see what I mean.

All of them have an opportunity to see that there are books, cultural books around. Because a lot of the books that they’ve seen they’ve said, oh we didn’t know these existed.

You know when they came to… carnival day…parents and the children, they were very surprised to see that there were these books around, and they appreciated that these books… they could at least have access to them, you know. At the moment not necessarily in the library – some of them in the library – but they know my service has all these books, which is quite appreciated.
Opportunities for fun and enjoyment

None of the service providers in their original ‘Theories of Change’ included enjoyment as an outcome. However, there was evidence from the services through observations and interviews with service providers, children and young people that this had been an important gain:

*We have outings, lots of things, lots of times, it’s fun. We have really really fun.*

*Colouring, there’s lots of toys and things to do and every time we come here there’s lots of new things for you to enjoy and everything.*

*I love to do loads of things like read, write, spell. I have fun I see my friends.*

Young people at another service said that the project made them feel happy, glad, joyful, excited, good, and active. One young woman said that she looks forward to going to the service and said that they make her feel happy, excited, pleased, fit, proud and full of energy.

Opportunities to gain an enhanced sense of community and citizenship

An outcome that was not always necessarily anticipated by services has been the development of a sense of community and citizenship in the children. Through using approaches such as linking children with older people, disabled people and people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds beneficial outcomes were described:

*They’re working with different people, regardless of their ethnic background, regardless of their religious background. They also know that these are older people in some cases and they have the appropriate respect. We’ve got people that are partial disabled and they will work with them so it does make them better citizen...it gives them more of a sense of community... they appreciate their community more. They’ve got more of a community spirit. And if we start with the children at that age to form a community spirit it means that as they grow up the positive citizenship, as they get older they will be passing it on...Well it’s beneficial now, it will be beneficial in the future.*

In one of the sites there was also work to bring the different communities and groups within them together. This did not appear to be about addressing any tensions in the communities but instead about providing activities and opportunities that, whilst targeted, were experienced as inclusive.

Children felt that, as well as services offering them the opportunity to make friends, they were also able to contribute by helping others. Children talked about personal
benefits in terms of seeing other children get on well when they helped them with a
task.

We never met before and when we did it was very good because they helped
and they learnt something new.

The thing that changed is little children have joined us and we have been
doing different sort of things. It made me feel great when the children were
helping because they could learn about new things.

A learning mentor from one school using a service also confirmed this outcome.

…when we go on a Wednesday we go with the junior school and I think
they’re year five and year six…and it’s lovely to watch the children interacting
together. Also the year five children are becoming like buddies to the younger
children, so they will take them under their wing…

having a wide diversity of users and working jointly with partner groups, has
given the young people and families a chance to mix and socialise with
people of many different cultures in a safe and supportive environment, and
to make friends with people they may not normally (service provider).

Summary points

• The data gathered indicates that those children and families that used the
Children’s Fund black and minority ethnic provision experienced the services
as helpful and useful. The gains described by those providing the services and
those using the services suggested that the services have supported children
to learn and to take up new opportunities and experiences. There is also
evidence that families have seen a change in their children’s behaviour and
that the services have encouraged the take-up of productive, less disruptive
activities by children.

• The monitoring and evaluation processes adopted by the services and the
Children’s Fund teams meant it was impossible to track the impact of the
services beyond the descriptive data gathered. The intended outcomes for the
services as articulated within the original theories of change included hoped-
for improvements in mainstream educational outcomes, improved overall well-
being and some changes in practices. The services studied collected very little
data that might usefully capture the changes that were anticipated. This is in
part connected to the limited contact between the services and the
mainstream preventative service providers. The absence of these links meant
tracking changes in children beyond those seen by the community providers and families proved difficult.

The intended outcomes for children as a result of supporting the valuing of their heritage and the promotion of skills for coping with racism are very difficult to measure. Children, families and service providers talked about increased confidence and self-respect as well as cultural knowledge and appreciation.
Chapter 6: Review and Recommendations for Ways Forward

This concluding chapter considers the learning arising from the evaluation of the services for black and minority ethnic children. Using the learning, some recommendations are made for the future strategic development of services, and for practitioners aiming to deliver effective services.

The similarities between the case study sites whilst limiting the potential for comparative commentary does allow for common learning to be identified.

Themed services

Both case study sites – in common with many partnerships nationally – decided to adopt a themed approach to black and minority ethnic service development. The rationales for this approach were based on an analysis of existing provision that indicated to the partnerships planning the services that black and minority ethnic children needed targeted services to meet their needs. In both case study sites it also reflected the desire to work with the knowledge and expertise of the black and minority ethnic communities and providers. The brief review in Chapter 2 highlights the potential difficulties faced when services work with groups as ‘separate’, but also describes the positive choices made by black and minority ethnic providers and communities to develop provision outside the mainstream, given the short comings of the existing provision. As a strategic stakeholder highlighted: And if there hadn’t been the themes there would have been a whole group of children who would have been missed out in terms of the emerging communities… .

In the emerging policy context of a move towards locally-integrated children’s services, the future picture for the black and minority ethnic services in the sites is mixed. In Site A, the black and minority ethnic services needed to secure alternative funding to continue if they failed to meet the criteria set for ongoing support. The overall intention of the partnership was to support, where possible, the move of themed services into the new arrangements for children’s services. It was unclear whether the black and minority ethnic theme would be incorporated into the wider arrangements, and which of the services (if any) would secure ongoing funding. In Site B, the theme was linked into a wider black and minority ethnic forum with the intention that the services and the children using the services could become part of a larger grouping and therefore could be more effective in ensuring the profile of black and minority ethnic services are maintained. Recently Site B has also been able to
pilot a service which attempts to build links between the community based provision and the mainstream provision.

The early decisions to theme services was the subject of some reflection:

And that really was the mistake, what we should have done, was explore in a much wider context issue of interface between children's experiences, their family support and race. And develop models which looked beyond ethnic experience. Because in doing so, it was a hugely exclusive process and extremely essentialist in its foundation. And ultimately what we have to think about, well how does that really benefit the children of (this city)? How does responding to race in that model become a really useful way to build a sustainable way for the future?

This reflection captures a concern about how the themed services can play into local integrated services. If, in future, preventative services are to maintain a themed approach for black and minority ethnic children, the evidence suggests careful processes and structures will need to be developed to ensure learning from the theme cascades into other providers and services and informs the wider development of children's services. Failure to do so may make mainstream services less responsive to the needs of black and minority ethnic children, and the valuable learning within the theme may become lost.

**Achieving change and influencing the mainstream**

There are some contradictions and tensions evident within the evidence gathered about the intentions of the services. Specifically some providers placed an emphasis on equipping children with additional knowledge and skills so that they could achieve successful individual outcomes within the education system – a ‘changing child’ focus. However, this emphasis was not matched with an emphasis on changing the mainstream approaches to the needs of black and minority ethnic children. Whilst a limited number of providers did attempt to influence the mainstream, the majority were changing the child whilst still perceiving the mainstream as difficult and discriminatory. The absence of routine gathering of data that tracked the mainstream outcomes for the target groups using the themed services made evaluating any changes achieved difficult. However, observational data and the data gathered from children, families and providers suggested that whilst individual children were able to perform better at school, no service was able to describe changes within local mainstream provision that would reduce the barriers faced by black and minority ethnic children.
Future developments should consider how to ensure very early ‘sign up’ by mainstream providers to both the reasons for change and the change process. As this evaluation illustrates failure to get this local engagement will reduce the impact of any themed services that are developed on outcomes for children. As reflected more generally in the findings of NECF, the move towards a focus on the barriers to inclusion would enable a more sustained process of change to be developed.

Facilitating networks
Although many characteristics of the strategies and services developed by the two case study sites were similar, the extent to which services and projects were networked was different. The ongoing work within Site B, to bring together services and to facilitate their work as a forum, seemed linked to the capacity of the theme to encourage learning from each other, to influence local developments and to feel part of a wider picture of provision. The final report by NECF draws out the impact of informal and formal networking on the potential influence of the Children’s Fund (see Chapters 2 and 8 of Edwards, et al., 2006). The development of the services for black and minority ethnic children echoes this wider finding. The ongoing facilitation and support of informal and formal networks for services to marginalised children (this includes resources to meet, structures and processes for meeting and the legitimacy and weight given to any requests and recommendations coming from such groupings) seems likely to enhance the overall impact of the provision and should therefore be a priority for future strategic and service development.

The role of black and minority ethnic providers
The services included in this evaluation were all either based within local black and minority ethnic community providers, or drew heavily on links within the black and minority ethnic communities. The rationale for the reliance on black and minority ethnic providers and organisations was based on intentions to use the expertise and knowledge held by these groups. It also ensured that services were culturally responsive and appropriate. The analysis of the data was also able to identify some of the challenges and difficulties that surfaced as a result of basing provision within the black and minority ethnic community and voluntary sector. The Children's Fund funding brought with it particular administrative requirements, monitoring and evaluation expectations and –particularly in case study Site A – responsibilities for taking forward the strategic planning. These demands placed a heavy burden on groups and organisations that typically had insecure funding histories and limited
infrastructures. The failure to capacity build prior to and then alongside the allocation of funding caused frustration, anxiety and at times anger.

The uncertainty about long-term funding led to a reduction in services in both case study sites. At times the Children’s Fund was seen as repeating past negative experiences for the groups – that of high profile initiatives needing the expertise of the black and minority ethnic groups but failing to build careful partnerships that ensured ongoing working relationships.

The evidence gathered by NECF about the experiences of those taking up the services demonstrates the value and benefits of community and voluntary involvement. However, for any activity to become sustainable, careful work is needed very early on to build the necessary capacity within the small voluntary groups to meet the expectations of the funders and deliver the services. Future developments should avoid any assumptions about capacity and should listen carefully to past experiences to avoid replicating difficulties. It is also clear, both from this evaluation and reports elsewhere, that clarity about medium and long-term funding arrangements is crucial for small-scale organisations to act as partners in service development.

**Supporting helpful practices**

The evaluation was able to gather evidence of services and practices that presented positive images of children’s cultures, and aimed to recognise and work with children about the racism they experienced. A number of the services prioritised the development of self-confidence and pride as tools for enabling children to explore their potential, and as a protective factor against future discrimination. Staff displayed a range of skills, knowledge and personal attributes. There was evidence of providers actively recruiting and supporting ‘non-traditional’ staff to deliver their services. As a result children and families were able to experience the services as responsive and helpful, with short and medium-term benefits being described.

The practices developed and supported in the services evaluated offer useful learning for future service provision. Some of the services had long histories and others were very new and innovative. Mechanisms are needed to ensure that the responsive and beneficial practices that exist within the services are recognised and learnt from by mainstream providers. Ensuring that the practices valued by children
and families inform future mainstream practices would seem a valuable development from the work of the partnerships.

**Participation**

The evidence gathered by NECF suggests a mixed picture of child and family involvement in services. Whilst some services were set up and run by adult family and community members, other services described parents as too busy and hard-pressed to be able to participate. There was evidence of some children being consulted and included in individual service development. Overall there was little evidence of full participation by children and families who used the services in strategic planning and development. The development of effective networks and forums would seem a helpful way of creating opportunities for enhanced participation. However, the pressures facing all the services in terms of resources and poverty was a barrier to effective participation. The processes for participation will need wider local support and resourcing for this development to be possible.

**Every Child Matters (ECM) outcomes for black and minority ethnic children**

The outcomes sought by the services and experienced by children and families could be grouped as follows:

- Opportunities to enjoy new experiences and avoid troublesome activities.
- Opportunities to develop individual and family confidence in abilities and capacities.
- Opportunities to see and experience cultural history and identity as positive and rich.
- Opportunities to engage in and enjoy ‘non-traditional’ learning.
- Opportunities to acquire enhanced learning linked to potential mainstream attainment.
- Opportunities to develop an enhanced sense of community and citizenship.
- Opportunities for fun and enjoyment.
The outcomes listed can be mapped across to the ECM outcomes, there was evidence that children were being helped to stay safe, make positive contributions, be healthy and enjoy and succeed. The data gathered provided evidence of children and families experiencing positively the services offered within the Children’s Fund black and minority ethnic themes. However, all this must be set within a context of minimal evidence of mainstream change or impact. This would suggest that, given existing research and knowledge, the racism faced by the children and families will continue to significantly affect their lives and well-being. For the individual experiences that relate to the ECM outcomes to have a longer-term impact on outcomes for black and minority ethnic children, the discrimination experienced by black and minority ethnic communities will have to be addressed.

As discussed elsewhere in the NECF findings (see Edwards, et al., (2006), Chapters 6 and 7) the Children’s Fund has struggled to achieve change beyond the individual experiences of children and their families. The wider barriers facing black and minority ethnic children mean that without utilising understandings of prevention that work with changing systems rather than simply focusing on the child, better outcomes for black and minority ethnic children will remain difficult to achieve. The adoption of new broader understandings of prevention (see Edwards, et al., 2006, Appendix C for full discussion of new frameworks for understanding prevention) and better use of the existing legal and policy framework could help ensure the development of services that both support children and change the context in which they are expected to reach their potential.

The evaluation of services for black and minority ethnic children has been able to describe a range of practices, services and approaches. The challenge now lies in translating this learning from the Children’s Fund practice and strategic partnerships into the new arrangements for children’s services, and, in doing so, maintaining and developing the profile of prevention. The Children’s Fund’s legacies are directly relevant to the emerging local arrangements for services for children and families and need to be taken seriously.
References


