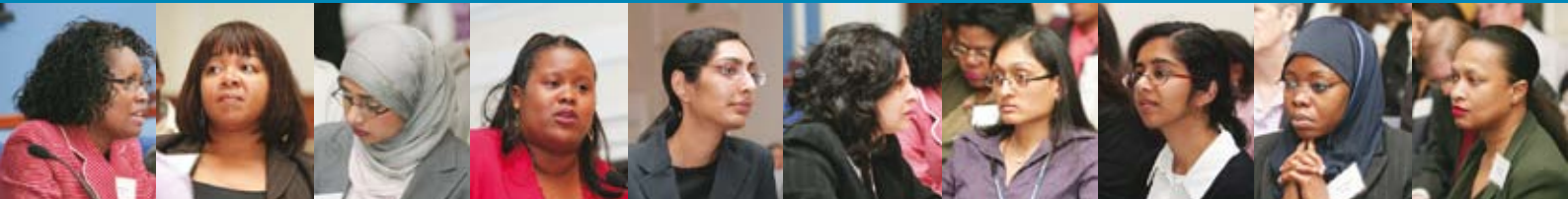


Moving on up?

Bangladeshi, Pakistani and
Black Caribbean women
and work

Early findings from the EOC's
investigation in England

September 2006



Women. Men. Different. Equal.
Equal Opportunities Commission

About the investigation

Moving on up? is a statutory investigation under the Sex Discrimination Act 1975. The legislation gives the Equal Opportunities Commission the power to undertake general formal investigations into deep-seated issues of gender inequality or discrimination, and to make recommendations to those in a position to make changes, including Government.

The investigation covers England, Wales and Scotland, although this report relates only to England.

For the full terms of reference of this investigation, please see appendix 1.

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We also wish to thank the many individuals and organisations who have taken the time to share information and experiences with us in the last 12 months. See appendix 3.

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Executive summary

Introduction

This report uncovers a major opportunity for Britain. New generations of Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black Caribbean women are coming forward, increasingly well qualified and with high aspirations of combining work and family life. Because of demographic changes they are going to be an increasingly vital part of Britain's workforce, especially in key cities, where white British people will soon no longer be in the majority.

Young Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black Caribbean women have similar expectations to white women. Yet the reality they are likely to face in relation to work is, sadly, very different, with a higher risk of unemployment, lower pay and fewer prospects of promotion. As their numbers in the workforce grow, the danger is that they will become increasingly segregated in certain sectors and with certain employers – more so even than white women who are also concentrated in a narrow range of jobs. Although a high proportion of older Pakistani and Bangladeshi women remain outside the labour market, partly related to low levels of qualifications, younger Pakistani and Bangladeshi women are doing well at school and want to have a successful career.

If nothing is done to open up more job opportunities for these younger women, they and their families will continue to miss out economically, employers will lose out on their talents and skills, and communities run a greater risk of segregation across race and faith communities. 90% of Pakistani and Bangladeshi women are Muslim.

We summarise some of the opportunities to be seized or lost in figure 1.

However, there are positive signs – **the vast majority of employers we surveyed saw the business case for employing ethnic minority women**, some were employing these women in large numbers and there is evidence of good practice. The young women who have talked to us were very positive about their own futures, seeing themselves not as victims, and determined to overcome any obstacles in their way to achieve their ambitions.

It is clear, however, that Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black Caribbean women feel that discrimination affects their opportunities. Indeed, fear of discrimination seems to be one factor limiting their choices of career: our research has found that women prefer to work for employers where they see evidence that they will be welcome. This in turn may create a vicious circle of segregation, with ethnic minority women being more likely to go for jobs in workplaces where they can see that other women from a similar background are already present. Our research has also revealed that a far higher proportion of these women, compared to white women, are being asked at job interviews about their plans for marriage and children, which suggests that they may be more at risk of sex discrimination than white women. In addition, about one in five Pakistani and Bangladeshi women employees say that they have experienced negative attitudes toward them because of their religious dress.

Nevertheless, some employers and some women are succeeding where others are not. We must find ways to spread that success more widely. The focus of this investigation is to identify how this can be done.

A key starting point is to understand the different circumstances facing women, as these are all too often obscured by generalisations and stereotypes. The experience of Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black Caribbean women in relation to work is inevitably different to that of men with the same backgrounds

and different again to that of white women. A common factor for Pakistani and Bangladeshi women is that over 90% are Muslim, with many younger women choosing to identify on faith rather than ethnic lines. Muslim women who go out to work face additional stereotypes associated with their faith and culture. Generalisations can also be dangerous here, however, as there are many differences between Muslim women. Some, but not all, wear hijab or other Islamic dress, need quiet space to pray during working hours, fast during Ramadan, or follow other religious practices.

Figure I Opportunities to be seized or lost

Opportunities to be seized

- 16 year old Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi girls:
 - have better GCSE results than boys from the same ethnic origin and (in most cases) white boys
 - are more ambitious than white girls in the same schools
 - want and expect to have a successful career.
- Young, under 35 year old Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women in employment are more likely to aspire to senior positions when they have dependent children than white British women.
- Black Caribbean, Bangladeshi and Pakistani women in employment are more likely to be graduates than white British women and men.
- Ethnic minority women could account for much of the growth of our future workforce.

Opportunities lost already

- Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi 16 year olds think it is harder for them to get a job than white girls and are more likely to exclude possible careers because of their sex, ethnicity or faith (Table 16).
- Compared to their white counterparts, working Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women under 35 are:
 - three times more likely to be often asked about plans for marriage and children at interview (Table 14)
 - much more likely to experience negative attitudes because of their religious dress (Table 14)
 - fifty percent more likely to have difficulty finding a job (Table 14).
- Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women of working age in the labour market:
 - are far more likely to be unemployed than white British women with similar qualifications – and this is true of graduates as well as less qualified women (Table 4)
 - don't get the same pay gains from higher education when working as equivalent males (Table 7)
 - are less likely to reach senior positions than white British women, despite having better qualifications (Table 8).
- Nearly 60% of organisations employing more than 25 people in areas with higher-than-average numbers of black/Asian people don't have a workforce that reflects the number of black and Asian women in or seeking work. Over 30% employ no black and Asian women at all.

The EOC's investigation seeks to understand how gender, race and faith affect Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black Caribbean women's employment opportunities.

Drawing on new research and the voices of the women who have told us about their experiences, this interim report seeks to present the facts we have and seek your views on how best to tackle the barriers to change. These views will inform the final report and recommendations we will present to Government next year.

What is emerging is that it is wrong solely to focus, as many currently do, on 'cultural factors' to explain why a high proportion of Pakistani and Bangladeshi women are not in the labour market. Disadvantage within the labour market needs to be addressed as well, including higher rates of unemployment, slower rates of progress for ethnic minority women across sectors and into higher-ranking jobs and lower pay. Whilst lifestyle, culture and levels of education do influence women's choices about work and family, our evidence shows that public services and workplace custom and practice are very likely to be critical in enabling, or limiting, the job prospects of Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black Caribbean women who want to work. Despite changing aspirations and better educational attainment, younger women still face an uphill struggle in their employment and are experiencing discrimination. Many workplaces have not woken up to the opportunity they present. The fact that some employers, and some parts of the country, are doing much better than others in terms of employing and promoting black and Asian women suggests that employment practices, as well as labour market factors, are likely to be equally if not more significant barriers than cultural attitudes within communities.

The following sets out the key facts, and the conclusions we draw from them, in more depth.

A growing opportunity due to generational changes

There appears to be big generational differences amongst Pakistani and Bangladeshi women.

Younger women's aspirations in particular are changing.

Whilst Pakistani and Bangladeshi women as an overall group are much less likely than white women or Black Caribbean women to be attached to the labour market, the 'economic activity' rates are much higher amongst 'second generation' women, born in the UK.

At age 16, just like white girls, Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi girls expect to combine family and career. Furthermore, the majority of girls from all backgrounds said their parents supported them in this.

- **90% of Bangladeshi girls did not agree that their parents would 'expect them to get married and have children rather than follow a career', which wasn't significantly less than the 97% of white girls who said the same.**

For younger women aged 16–34, economic inactivity rates for Pakistani and Bangladeshi women are higher than for white women, but among under-35s who are in employment there is the same, if not higher, degree of ambition as their white contemporaries.

- **52% of young Pakistani and 47% of young Bangladeshi women employees aspire to be their own boss, a senior professional or in senior management, compared to only 42% of their white British counterparts.**

Amongst older Pakistani and Bangladeshi women, initial examination of the research suggests that better qualified women are more likely to be economically active: **education, with support for**

women to go into further education or training in their 20s and 30s if they wish to do so, is likely to be a critical factor in opening up the chance to find paid work. As for all women, having children has a big impact on their choices about work, so it is important to be aware of **differences in family patterns**. Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black Caribbean women have their first child on average earlier than white British women. Pakistani and Bangladeshi women are likely to have a larger number of children, whilst Black Caribbean women are more likely to be lone parents.

In educational achievement, girls from all these groups are making remarkable progress. Pakistani and Bangladeshi girls are catching up with white girls in terms of GCSE results, and have already overtaken white boys. Black Caribbean girls showed the biggest increase of all groups between 2003 and 2005. Ethnic minority women from all these groups, aged 16–22, are slightly more likely than white British women to be in full-time education.

Young Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black Caribbean women represent a major economic opportunity, as some employers already recognise. All things being equal, they should be set to make a major contribution to Britain's productivity. If we create the conditions for these highly qualified, motivated and determined young women, who want to work, to get jobs commensurate with their qualifications, they should earn more than their mothers, which would make an impact on reducing child poverty for the next generation. If we manage to attract black and Asian women into a wider range of organisations and sectors, and open up opportunities for more of them to rise up through the ranks into decision making roles, we could see positive benefits in terms of social cohesion, particularly in those cities where ethnic minorities are becoming a larger and larger proportion of the working age population. The opportunity for such positive change is growing because the ethnic minority population as a whole has a younger age profile – there are a lot more ethnic minority women coming through.

A risk that the opportunity will be lost

But it is an opportunity that is likely to be lost if no proactive measures are taken to change current labour market outcomes for women from these groups.

- For those aged 16–24, Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women are all **more than twice as likely to be unemployed** as white women.
- Pakistani female graduates under 24 are over four times more likely than white female graduates to be unemployed.

Women as a whole are still virtually absent from some jobs and over-concentrated in others, as are ethnic minorities, but it is worse for these ethnic minority women than it is for white women.

- 32% of all Bangladeshi women work in just five occupations, compared to 24% of white women.
- A quarter of Pakistani and Bangladeshi women work in the wholesale and retail sectors and 28% of Black Caribbean women work in health and social work. The highest concentration of white British women is 18% in health and social work.

Some workplaces remain no-go areas for black and Asian women, even in areas with significant ethnic minority populations.

- In local labour markets with above average ethnic minority populations, nearly a third of employers with more than 25 employees have no black or Asian women in their workforce.
- A further quarter in those areas are employing proportionately fewer black and Asian women than the numbers present in the local labour market.

Indeed, there is evidence of a **vicious circle of segregation**, in that the lack of ethnic minority women in many workplaces and in many types of work means there are few positive role models. Fear of discrimination may also restrict choices. Our research shows that Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black Caribbean girls are attracted to employers who are already demonstrating that they welcome staff from a range of different ethnic backgrounds. 73% of Black Caribbean girls, 56% of Pakistani girls and 61% of Bangladeshi girls (compared to 38% of white British girls) strongly agree that this is important to them in choosing a job.

- **Even in labour markets with a higher than average ethnic minority population, four out of five employers of more than 25 people do not have a single black or Asian woman in senior management who could be a role model.**

Such segregation within local labour markets means some employers are losing out on the benefits of having a diverse workforce and limits opportunities to break down barriers between different communities in the workplace, which is so important for social cohesion.

We have found a **bigger pay gap** for Pakistani and Bangladeshi women and **lower glass ceilings** for women from all three of the groups at the centre of our investigation. Although success in education is associated with greater involvement in the labour market, it is not proving to be a guarantee of wider job opportunities or higher earnings.

High proportions of young (under-35) Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women say they experience sexism, racism and discrimination at work and find it harder to get a job or get promotion than white British women.

- More than one in every six Black Caribbean and Pakistani young women in employment hear either racist or sexist comments.
- One in every six young Pakistani women employees and one in eight young Bangladeshi and Black Caribbean women employees have either been asked about their plans for marriage or children at job interviews or been asked by their employers what their partner/family think about them working. Only one in 17 young white British women employees experience this.
- One in five young Pakistani and Bangladeshi women employees experience negative attitudes towards them because of their religious dress.
- About one in five young Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black Caribbean women have often had to take a job at a lower level because no one would employ them at the level they were qualified for, compared to only one in twenty young white British women employees.
- Over one in three of young Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black Caribbean women employees we surveyed had taken jobs below the level of their qualifications, a proportion more than 50% higher than the proportion of young white British women employees who had done so.

Change is possible

The young Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black Caribbean women we have talked to do not see themselves as victims. They are well aware of the difficulties they may face in the workplace, often because of the experience of their mothers before them. But this only makes them more **determined to overcome the barriers** and to do better for themselves and their families. They are investing heavily in their education in order to achieve this success.

- Over 90% of employers with more than 25 employees in areas of above average black or Asian populations **agree that there is a strong business case** for employing black and Asian women.

Furthermore, **some employers are already taking advantage of the skills and potential presented by Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black Caribbean women.** We have found encouraging examples of proactive strategies by individual employers who have improved their recruitment and progression rates for black and Asian women.

- Overall, half of employers of over 25 people in areas of above average black or Asian populations are taking at least one action specifically targeted at improving the recruitment or progression of these women.

... but to date, success is uneven

- **The majority of employers of over 25 people in areas of higher than average black or Asian populations are not employing black and Asian women at the levels they are represented in the local pool of people available for work, so they are missing out on the business benefits of a diverse workforce.**

The picture is worse in the private sector and worse in the manufacturing sector, but there are also marked differences between some employers in the same sector. There is a **danger of polarisation.**

- 80% of those who are not employing any black or Asian women have no plans to introduce initiatives to improve their recruitment or progression.
- over 40% of those already employing at or above the level of the local market do have plans to improve their recruitment and progression.

Interestingly, a significant proportion of employers **are unaware** that they are not employing a representative group of black and Asian women compared to the labour force available to them. Those that do recognise a problem of under-representation are not sure how to improve the rate of application, which obviously makes it more difficult to tackle effectively.

Some local labour markets also seem to be more successful than others in achieving positive employment outcomes for Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women. For example, in Leicester, the economic activity rate for Pakistani women is 38% compared to 23% in Birmingham and the unemployment rates are 12% and 22% respectively. The unemployment rate for Black Caribbean women in Tower Hamlets, at 11%, is almost double the 6% in Bradford. White women's economic activity and unemployment rates in these areas are broadly the same.

“*The young Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black Caribbean women we have talked to do not see themselves as victims. They are well aware of the difficulties they may face in the workplace. But this only makes them more determined to overcome the barriers and to do better for themselves and their families. They are investing heavily in their education in order to achieve this success.*”

Policy implications

The findings of our investigation so far suggest it is important to move away from simply looking at 'cultural factors' which locate the problem entirely with the women themselves or with their communities. Employment initiatives targeting ethnic minority women have tended to focus on the provision of better education and training to address skills gaps. Such initiatives may benefit older generations of women – those needing help with English as a second language, those with low qualifications and those who remain outside the labour market but are looking to find work for the first time. However, there is also a need to review policies and practices that may indirectly put women from certain groups at a disadvantage. This is particularly urgent for younger generations of women of Pakistani and Bangladeshi heritage and for Black Caribbean women who have high aspirations but face real barriers to achieving them.

We think that three specific areas need to be explored further:

I. Avoid generalisations about ethnic minority women in general and about Muslim women in particular, in policy making and in employment practices.

We need to understand more about the circumstances facing women from specific groups, to unpick the complex interplay, not just between race and gender, but between these and other factors such as faith, geography, age, educational qualifications and becoming a mother.

There are significant differences in employment patterns between the three groups that are the focus of the EOC investigation, compared to white women. We have also found significant differences *within* the same group, with younger Pakistani and Bangladeshi women being better qualified than their mothers, for example.

If nothing is done to improve their labour market prospects, they risk seeing their ambitions frustrated and Britain faces a growing risk of wasted potential. If progress could be made on reducing segregation and improving pay prospects for Pakistani and Bangladeshi women it could help the Government achieve key targets to close the gender pay gap, reduce child poverty, close the ethnic minority employment gap and reduce differences in unemployment between regions. For example, the gap between ethnic minority employment and the overall rate is currently 15%, yet there are a quarter of a million ethnic minority women in Britain of working age who are not currently in work but would like to have a job (Labour Force Survey 2005). If these women were able to get a job, 50% of the Government's target to close the ethnic minority employment gap would be achieved.

'Equality proofing' existing programmes and policies intended to improve employment outcomes for ethnic minorities, reduce unemployment between regions and to close the pay gap for women would help ensure that these initiatives are equally useful to Black Caribbean, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Muslim women.

We would like the evidence presented in this report to be used to ensure that the Women and Work Commission Action Plan, National Childcare Strategy, and the forthcoming Skills Strategy are used as levers to improve the labour market outcomes for ethnic minority women. Policy initiatives emerging from the Ethnic Minority Employment Task Force could also have a profound impact on ethnic minority women's employment – including the new Cities Strategy, Business Commission, action on procurement and the opportunity of the 2012 Olympics, but only if they have an explicit gender focus. The new Commission for Integration and Cohesion could usefully look at the different issues and opportunities presented by women as well as men, and consider the importance of realising economic opportunity for women to creating strong communities.

2. Understand better what is working and why amongst employers and promoting best practice.

We have commissioned further research looking in more depth at the factors which improve recruitment, retention and progression rates of black and Asian women, as well as those factors which are holding back their participation and progress. Our findings to date suggest that employers may need to review their policies and practices to ensure these support the involvement and inclusion of black and Asian women. Those seeking to increase levels of diversity in their workforce need to think about how their organisation is perceived by those they seek to attract. There may also be a need to review cultural attitudes and beliefs within the existing workforce that could lead to discrimination. Such discrimination may be indirect and unintentional, but still put women from minority groups at a disadvantage when it comes to recruitment and promotion.

The first step for an individual employer is to be aware of how far they are taking advantage of the opportunity ethnic minority women present. Giving employers easy access to local labour market information could help them judge whether or not they are employing a representative group and benchmark themselves against other employers in the area. Over 40% of those employers in areas with an above-average economically active ethnic minority population who do not employ a representative proportion of these groups are unaware that they are employing below the market level. Over 80% of these have no plans to introduce new initiatives to improve their recruitment. Regional Development Agencies might play a useful role here, for example, in making information available to employers about ethnic minority women in the local labour market and/or in supporting those who want to improve the diversity of their workforce but are unsure how to go about it.

Diagnosis, to research and identify the issues within their organisation, is likely to be valuable, so that an individual organisation knows more clearly what it is they need to do. We would welcome views on how employers could best be encouraged and supported in undertaking this kind of diagnosis, perhaps taking forward the equality check suggested by the Women and Work Commission. Investors in People have made a commitment to include equality in recruitment and selection when the standard is reviewed next year. This should provide an opportunity for employers to gain accreditation for good practice, and to benchmark themselves against other organisations. If employers do not meet the 'gold standard' of the best employers, a 'toolkit' approach might be valuable, with examples of strategies proven to work in a comparable setting.

As well as action by individual employers, interventions in schools and colleges to build links between employers and young women making decisions about further study or careers, could improve understanding on both sides and open up opportunities for ethnic minority women to work in a wider range of jobs and sectors. Our research of 16 year olds shows that at this age half of Black Caribbean girls and two-thirds of Pakistani and Bangladeshi girls feel that they can't apply for certain jobs because they are female, and because of their ethnic background or faith. This compares with a third of white British girls. There is some evidence that this may be linked to fear of discrimination based on assumptions rather than direct knowledge of specific employers. Initiatives to break down assumptions that certain jobs are only for men, only for women, or only for white British people, by improving careers advice and opening up work experience, for example, could be very helpful. Publicity about women from different backgrounds working in a variety of jobs and sectors, including at senior levels, would send a positive message to young women and their families about the job opportunities open to them.

Further examination of why there are such different employment rates for ethnic minority women in different parts of the country would also be useful because it suggests scope for local interventions and regional policies to make a difference.

3. Remove the institutional barriers facing ethnic minority women who want to find paid work.

Our evidence already suggests that **public policy interventions, particularly at key 'trigger episodes' such as leaving school and having children, could make a difference.** These trigger episodes need to be better understood, ideally through further research. In the meantime, data from the EOC's investigation could be used to conduct gender impact assessments, making sure that public services are sensitive to the needs of women from different ethnic and faith groups who want to combine work with caring responsibilities. Public transport, work incentives and tax credits, advice to job seekers, education, training and childcare are all critical areas. Assessing the impact of these public services on women from different communities would ensure that the considerable investment of public funds into economic development and regeneration is filtering down to Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black Caribbean women and their families, who are over-concentrated in the most economically disadvantaged parts of the country.

Conclusion

Britain's Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black Caribbean women are changing and Britain needs to change too if their potential is to be realised. Despite some positive signs, high unemployment, lower pay, poor prospects and the concentration of ethnic minority women in a narrow range of jobs and sectors will not disappear by themselves. Although training and support schemes to help ethnic minority women find work are important, particularly for those outside the labour market, it is also necessary to tackle policies and practices that directly or indirectly make it harder for Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black Caribbean women to get jobs at all levels and in all sectors of our economy. Without action to remove structural barriers and reduce the discriminatory effects of generalisations, stereotyped beliefs and attitudes about ethnic minority women and about Muslim women, the growing opportunity offered by younger women in particular will be lost to the labour market of the future. Families and communities will continue to face economic disadvantage, employers will miss out and our workplaces will continue to be segregated on race, faith and gender lines, putting at risk efforts to build social cohesion.

“ Without action to remove structural barriers and reduce the discriminatory effects of generalisations, stereotyped beliefs and attitudes about ethnic minority women and about Muslim women, the growing opportunity offered by younger women in particular will be lost to the labour market of the future. ”

I. Introduction

This investigation so far has shown that young Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black Caribbean women are increasingly well-qualified and keen to work. Employers in areas of above average black and Asian populations almost universally see the case for employing black and Asian women. Yet their success in doing so is patchy. If we are to ensure that these women fulfil their aspirations and the country benefits fully from their talents, we need to recognise the particular circumstances facing women from different ethnic and faith backgrounds.

Women's and men's roles and experiences do differ from each other. In respect of the whole population this has been recognised and incorporated into policy and business practice. In relation to public services a Gender Equality Duty is being introduced so that public bodies deliver more effectively by recognising that needs differ between the sexes. In the development of pension policy the differences in earnings history, life expectancy and household status between the sexes is now a key consideration. Business recognises differences between the sexes in consumption behaviour, attitudes and responses to advertising.

That there are differences in the roles and experiences – and hence needs – between women and men is no less true of ethnic minorities than of the population as a whole. Yet until very recently, research, policy development and business practice have not paid as much attention to gender differences within ethnic groups. The perspective of women has often been invisible in discussions about ethnic minority employment – with the notable exception of concern about the low economic activity rates of Pakistani and Bangladeshi women.

This General Formal Investigation, with the support of the European Social Fund, therefore aims to illuminate whether the aspirations and talents of Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black Caribbean women are being fully realised in employment and if not, what approaches look promising to improve the situation. The evidence collected for the investigation so far suggests that we need to surface the views and experience of women because they vary between and within different ethnic communities and are not the same as the men of the same ethnic group. These variations have implications for the detail of implementing public policies and employer practices most effectively.

We are concentrating on ethnic minority women because there is a gap in the research available to explain their employment experience. It is not a fruitful exercise to discuss at the margin whether the disadvantages faced by ethnic minority men are greater or less than the disadvantages faced by ethnic minority women. The point is that the causes of any disadvantage – and the solutions – may be *different*. Even a cursory look at the data shows that the employment patterns of Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women differ from men in the same ethnic groups:

- **Younger Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women are more qualified than men in employment.**
- **Female graduates are more likely than males to be unemployed.**
- **Higher qualifications do not greatly reduce the pay gap for women, unlike men.**
- **They are more likely than men to be in temporary jobs.**
- **They work in different sectors.**
- **They are less likely to be in senior roles.**
- **Pakistani and Bangladeshi women are less likely to be employed than men.**

General discussions about ethnic minority employment too often ignore these differences.

The economic case for change

There is an economic and social imperative to ensure that as far as possible everyone, including ethnic minority women, has an equal opportunity to fulfil their career aspirations. The Government calculates that half the growth in the working age population between 1999 and 2009 will come from ethnic minorities. The proportion of Pakistanis and Bangladeshis who are under the age of 16 is over a third, double the proportion in the white population, implying that they will make up an increasing proportion of the future working population, particularly in key cities. In places like Birmingham and Leicester where ethnic 'minorities' are set to be the majority population, organisations which fail to attract ethnic minority women to work for them are going to run up against problems. Faced with an ageing population overall, employers (who are already facing skill shortages) are going to have to draw on a wider pool of talent in order to fill vacancies.

The interim report of the Equalities Review estimates that if jobs were found for all the Pakistani and Bangladeshi women who want to work, their income from productive employment would be £400 million – and the Government would save £300 million in transfer payments such as benefits.

“Individuals and government are worse off than they would be if they [had jobs]...these people could be contributing to the economy by producing goods and services so GDP could be higher than it is.”

Equalities Review, 2006

The Government has set itself key targets – to reduce the ethnic minority employment gap, to eradicate child poverty and to reduce the gaps between deprived areas and the rest of the country. Improving job prospects for ethnic minority women, as well as men, is an important part of achieving these goals.

The employment rate for women from all ethnic groups is lower than the male equivalent, so closing the ethnic minority employment gap means finding more jobs for ethnic minority women as well as men. The proportion of Pakistani and Bangladeshi women who want to find work is far higher for younger generations than the proportion of older generations actually working at the moment.

Figures from the Labour Force Survey, Spring 2005, show that 23% or 36,000 Pakistani and Bangladeshi women aged 16–34 who are not in employment want to be in work.

Yet the disadvantages faced by ethnic minority women in the workplace will not be solved by demographic and labour market trends alone. The Equalities Review found that at current rates of change it would take just under 100 years – until 2105 – to close the ethnic minority employment gap. Public policy makers and employers need to intervene now to accelerate the pace of change.

Beyond employment rates

The Ethnic Minority Employment Task Force has commissioned a range of useful research focused on improving the employment rate of ethnic minorities. Some of this analysis highlights differences between men and women. Our research looks at the quality and nature of jobs held by Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black Caribbean women, as well as their access to the labour market in the first place. We have found, for example, that **one in nine Pakistani women are in non-permanent jobs compared to one in 25 white British men**. Clearly the range, quality and nature of job opportunities available to ethnic minority women are an important part of the picture.

The social case for change

As well as an economic cost, there is a cost to society if barriers that need not be there constantly thwart the ambitions of significant sections of the community. If ethnic minority women's wages are low because they do not have the same opportunities as others with the same qualifications, there are consequences for child poverty. If ethnic minority women are concentrated in a narrow range of workplaces and sectors, the social cohesion impact of people mixing at work is reduced.

The investigation

Our research in England focuses on women from three ethnic groups: Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women. This is not to negate or dismiss the equally valid experiences of other ethnic minority women who have encountered difficulties at work. With limited resources, we had to focus on specific groups in order not to spread our analysis too thinly and over-generalise. These groups were chosen because the numbers of Pakistani and Bangladeshi women in employment are very low, and the rate at which Black Caribbean women progress to senior roles is slower than it is for women overall, despite the fact that they are more likely than white women to work full-time. We hope that this will indicate areas that would merit further research in relation to women from other ethnic minority and faith groups, as well as indicating where further investigation is needed in relation to women of Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black Caribbean heritage.

We have also focussed our limited research funds on four areas: re-analysis of large data sets – notably the 2001 Census – to confirm the broad patterns of success and difficulty for Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women; a survey of 600 younger women from these groups who are in employment; a survey of over a thousand 16 year olds; and a survey of over a thousand employers in labour markets with above average populations of black and Asian people. Parallel research for the EOC in Scotland and Wales that will be published separately will look at women from a wider range of ethnic backgrounds, reflecting the different make-up of the ethnic minority population in these countries.

There is scope for further research in a number of areas, should resources become available, as flagged up at different points in this report.

During the investigation we have, in addition, directly heard from over 100 ethnic minority women who have sent in details of their own employment experiences, as well as thousands of others we have met at events and conferences up and down the country, including a national conference for employers sponsored by the Home Office and a debate at the Trades Union Congress Black Workers' Conference in April 2006. We welcome further evidence from individuals and organisations in response to the issues raised in this interim report (see page 63).

The good news...

There is a 'good news' story emerging from the investigation:

- Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women have high aspirations.
- Recent GCSE results are similar for these women as for other women – and higher than most groups of men.
- There is almost universal buy-in from employers to the business case for employing these women.

That is the good news. But, given the potential and the strong case for change outlined above, Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women's success at work is not sufficiently widespread.

The bad news...

Particularly disturbing in relation to black and Asian women's employment is:

- **Some employers are not employing them**, even in areas where they are a significant part of the labour market. Nearly 60 percent of employers in these areas are either not employing black or Asian women at all (nearly a third), or at levels proportionately below their presence in the local labour market (a quarter). In the same sectors and some local areas other employers are employing black and Asian women in much higher proportions. This polarisation has implications for social cohesion, as well as meaning that some employers may be missing out on potential talent.
- **Some sectors are not reaping the benefit of employing ethnic minority women** – who are occupationally more segregated than white British women. For example, 25% of Bangladeshi women and 25% of Pakistani women are in the wholesale and retail sectors and 28% of Black Caribbean women are in health and social work. The highest concentration of white British women is 18% in health and social work.
- **Some local labour markets are not delivering for Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black Caribbean women.** For example, even in two labour markets with significant proportions of Pakistani women, with a similar age and qualification profile – Birmingham and Luton – economic activity rates for Pakistani women are 23% and 27% respectively and unemployment rates are 22% and 15% respectively¹.
- **There is widespread experience of discrimination and disadvantage** due to assumptions about them as women from particular ethnic backgrounds or, in the case of Pakistani and Bangladeshi women, related to their faith. To give one example, one in eight young Pakistani women employees are often asked about their plans for marriage or children at interview. In contrast only one in 30 young white British women employees say this has often been asked of them (Table 14). Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women's earnings do not rise in line with their qualifications compared to men (Table 7), and Pakistani and Bangladeshi women have a larger pay gap than white British women (Table 6). We do not know how far such negative experiences affect decisions of many Pakistani and Bangladeshi women to stay outside the labour market, but it is likely to be a contributory factor. For those who do go out to work, discrimination, or the fear of discrimination, is likely to be part of the explanation for ethnic minority women's concentration in occupations and organisations they perceive as 'safe'.

The challenge

Many ethnic minority women do succeed in fulfilling their aspirations in the labour market. Many employers manage to attract and retain a diverse workforce that increases their access to talent. The challenge is to unlock further potential for success because good outcomes for ethnic minority women and their employers are currently too patchy – and on the whole less good than for white women or men.

1. Census 2001.

This interim report

We start by summarising evidence to show that young Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women and their employers are motivated to achieve success (section 2), then show that their rates of employment, pay and progression are disturbingly uneven between employers, sectors and local labour markets (section 3).

Success at work requires a successful relationship between employers and employees, backed up by accurate information on both sides, free from stereotyped assumptions. It also relies on adequate infrastructure in terms of education, training, childcare and transport. In section 4, we highlight evidence on current experiences and beliefs that may be impacting on the employment relationship and in section 5, suggest that particular actions by employers are associated with greater success in employing black and Asian women. In section 6, we consider market information needs and highlight different family patterns which can have a bearing on services needed by women from different communities to support their employment choices.

Send us your views

We end with conclusions and suggestions for action in three broad areas. We welcome views on these, to inform the next stage of the investigation.

“*Young Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black Caribbean women are increasingly well-qualified and keen to work. Employers in areas of above average black and Asian populations almost universally see the case for employing black and Asian women. Yet their success in doing so is patchy.*”

2. Young women and employers want change

There is a shared desire for change, in that young ethnic minority women want a successful career and employers want to increase the diversity of their workforce.

2.1 Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women are motivated and aspirational

Young Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women feel that their aspirations and abilities are obscured by outdated stereotypes and generalisations. The research we have done for this investigation with girls at age 16² and with women employees under 35³ suggest that young Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women's aspirations and abilities are close to, or in many cases exceed, those of young white British men and women. We also found that young women irrespective of ethnic background or faith are encouraged by their family to follow a career. Other research (Ahmad et al, 2003 and Tyrer et al, 2006) has highlighted the significant role many Pakistani and Bangladeshi Muslim women attribute to their fathers in supporting their professional aspirations. This contradicts a commonly expressed view that Pakistani and Bangladeshi women, or Muslim women, are not in employment because their families hold them back.

- At 16, there is very little difference in career aspirations regardless of ethnic background. **If anything, the Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black Caribbean girls are more ambitious and determined to achieve independence and career success than their white counterparts.** For example, over half of Pakistani and Bangladeshi girls, and nearly half of Black Caribbean girls aspired to jobs at skill level 4 (usually requiring a degree and long periods of training/studying). In contrast only a third of white girls aspired to this⁴.

"I intend to work hard and get the job I want. I also intend to be successful and to make me and my parents proud."

Black Caribbean 16 year old girl

- Pakistani (58%), Bangladeshi (61%) and Black Caribbean 16 year old girls (67%) more than white girls (55%) do not think it's important to work near home when they begin paid work, perhaps reflecting more confidence and independence.

2. Nearly 1,200 year 11 girls and boys completed questionnaires in 14 schools that had significant numbers of Black Caribbean, Pakistani and/or Bangladeshi students. Of these 62 were Black Caribbean girls, 229 were Pakistani girls, and 142 were Bangladeshi girls. All data on 16 year olds quoted in this report come from this survey. The proportion saying that their parents were in 'professional' jobs was similar for the White British, Pakistani and Bangladeshi girls: so differences are unlikely to be a result of a different socio-economic mix in the sample. A higher proportion of Black Caribbean girls said that their parents were in 'professional' jobs, but the points we make in relation to them do not appear to be affected by this, although sample sizes limit such analysis. Full details of the survey, its findings and follow-on qualitative work can be found in Bhavnani, R and PTI Consultancy (2006) forthcoming.

3. 800 women under the age of 35 in employment were interviewed face-to-face in London, Birmingham, Bradford and Leeds. 200 of each ethnic group (Black Caribbean, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and white British) were interviewed. Data from this is sourced as Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black Caribbean women and employment survey. Full details can be found in Botcherby, S (2006) forthcoming.

4. Although it is not the focus of this investigation, it is striking that although the aspirations of Pakistani and Bangladeshi boys was similar to girls, only 35% of Black Caribbean boys and 16% of white boys in these schools aspired to level 4 jobs, something that merits further investigation.

- 90% of Pakistani and Bangladeshi 16 year old girls did not say their parents expect them to get married and have children rather than follow a career, compared to 97% of white girls – not a significant difference.

In the focus groups, young women mentioned encouragement from their fathers as well as mothers, spurring them on to do well at school in order to secure a better future:

“The thing is in my family, there has never been that success in the family, so my dad is expecting me to get all As... but it’s ‘cos like they have never had that success that they expect you to be the best.”

Bangladeshi 16 year old girl

- Pakistani and Bangladeshi girls (aged 16) are more likely than white and Black Caribbean girls to describe themselves as confident, and no more likely to describe themselves as shy.
- Of 6,000 women (aged 16–34) who described themselves as housewives⁵, there was very little difference between ethnic groups in terms of their wish to find paid work – for example, 26% of Bangladeshi housewives and 28% of white housewives said they would like to find paid work. (However, the proportion who are outside the labour force is higher for Pakistani and Bangladeshi women, a point we return to below).
- One in five Pakistani and Bangladeshi and one in six Black Caribbean young women employees (aged 16–34) are ultimately aiming to be their own boss, compared to only one in 10 young white British women employees.
- Of those not aiming to be their own boss and stating a position they are ultimately aiming for, similar proportions of each ethnic group aim to be a senior manager or senior professional: Black Caribbean (42%), Pakistani (47%), Bangladeshi (39%) and white British (41%) (Table 15).
- There is no significant difference between Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi young women employees (aged 16–34) and their white British counterparts in the proportion aiming for promotion in the near future (40–50%) and the range of things people are prepared to do to achieve this is similar (Table 15).

“It makes me want to do it just to prove that a girl can actually do it – to show that women can do it. Just because I am a girl why can’t I do the same as a man?” Black Caribbean girl

2.2 Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women are increasingly well qualified

The educational attainment of Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi girls in terms of those obtaining 5 GCSEs at A–C level has increased in recent years to nearly the same level as for white girls and, for Pakistani and Bangladeshis, performance exceeds that of white boys.

5. These 6,000 women were interviewed briefly face-to-face in the screening stage for the Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black Caribbean women and employment survey (see footnote 3).

Table 1a Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi girls GCSE results improving

% obtaining at least 5 GCSEs at A–C	Girls 2003	Girls 2005	Boys 2003	Boys 2005
White	57	60	46	50
Black Caribbean	40	49	25	33
Pakistani	48	54	36	43
Bangladeshi	53	59	39	47

DFES 2006.

This bodes well for the future. Already in the 2001 Census, the proportion of Black Caribbean women, born in the UK, with a degree or higher qualifications exceeded that of white British men or women and Pakistani and Bangladeshi women born in the UK had almost caught up – indeed the proportion of 16–24 year old women from these groups with degrees or better was already the same as for white British women.

Table 1b Young Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women born in the UK getting degrees at same rate as equivalent white British women

Proportion who have degrees (%)	White British men	White British women	Black Caribbean women	Pakistani women	Bangladeshi women
All working age	19	19	26	16	11
First generation	34	33	28	14	9
Born in the UK	19	19	24	18	16
16–24 year olds	10	11	10	11	9
First generation	15	17	12	10	8
Born in the UK	10	11	10	11	10

Notes: The majority of white British are born in the UK, but the first generation figures are for the small minority born abroad.

Source: 2001 Census commissioned tables, crown copyright 2004.

Table 1c shows the proportion of Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women achieving each level of qualification, with the white British figures underneath for comparison. If one looks at the position for young (16–24 year old), UK born women, these groups have more or less caught up with white British women – who themselves have been rapidly increasing their qualification levels relative to men. **About 70% of first generation Pakistani and Bangladeshi women of working age are not qualified to level 2, but the figures for those born in the UK, at 36% and 33% respectively, are lower than for white women born in the UK.** The rapid improvement for young UK born Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women is often disguised in average statistics that include the first generation, for whom there is still clearly an issue of lower qualifications than for white British. Other data sources, such as the Labour Force Survey or the GCSE and A level results that combine data for both first generation and UK born Pakistani and Bangladeshi women confirm this. In average figures for young Pakistani and Bangladeshi women, the high proportion aged 16–24 not born in the UK (30 and 56 percent respectively) can sometimes mask the increasing qualifications of younger Pakistani and Bangladeshi women who were born here.

Table 1c Young UK-born Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women have almost caught up with equivalent white British women

% of women with each level of qualification	Black Caribbean				Pakistani				Bangladeshi			
	Working age		16–24		Working age		16–24		Working age		16–24	
	IG	UK	IG	UK	IG	UK	IG	UK	IG	UK	IG	UK
Level 4	28	24	12	10	14	18	10	11	9	16	8	10
(White British)	33	19	17	11	33	19	17	11	33	19	17	11
Level 3	6	11	18	21	5	17	12	23	6	18	15	22
(White British)	13	9	29	23	13	9	29	23	13	9	29	23
Level 2	17	28	32	39	9	27	17	32	11	31	23	37
(White British)	23	24	33	36	23	24	33	36	23	24	33	36
Below Level 2	41	33	33	29	68	36	57	32	70	33	52	30
(White British)	28	43	20	29	28	43	20	29	28	43	20	29

Notes: Working age = All of working age. IG = First Generation; UK = UK born. Level 1 is equivalent to GCSE grades D – G. Level 2 is equivalent to GCSE grades A – C. Level 3 is equivalent to ‘A’ level. Level 4 is equivalent to degree level.

Source: 2001 Census commissioned tables, crown copyright 2004.

2.3 Employers see the business case for employing black and Asian women

Employers are also motivated at a general level, in that they can see the business case for employing black and Asian women. In our survey of 800 employers in local labour markets with an above-average population of black and Asian people⁶, 93% strongly agreed with at least one aspect of the business case: to recruit from the widest pool of talent (88%), to present a positive image (70%), to comply with legislation (67%), to bring additional skills and perspectives to the business (55%) or to reflect the diversity of customers/clients (45%). The strong belief in one or more aspects of the business case is apparent across sectors and size of employer.

“The main driver is that the organisation would be seen as an equitable employer – reflecting the community it serves.” Large employer

“It is in our business interests to ensure that our workforce reflects the diversity of the markets in which we operate. We are committed to a programme of cultural change to make sure that our people understand the business benefits of supporting diversity.” Lloyds TSB

6. This is a sample of 800 workplaces with over 25 employees in ‘travel-to-work areas’ where the resident population contains a proportion of black and Asian (2001 Census definition) population equal to or higher than the national average. An additional 356 ‘boost’ interviews were undertaken of employers employing black and Asian women at levels equal to or higher than the local population, taking the overall survey numbers to over 1000. Figures from this survey are sourced as Ethnic Minority Women at Work survey. Details of this research can be found in Adams, L et al (2006) forthcoming.

3. Outcomes are patchy

Women from some ethnic groups are less likely to be in work, and less likely to be in jobs at a senior level, than white women. Even within the same sectors, some employers are recruiting black and Asian women to a level at or above the proportion who are economically active in their local labour markets, whilst others do not. In effect there is segregation occurring not only within occupations, but also within local labour markets between those organisations employing relatively high numbers of black and Asian women and those not doing so. Too many employers are missing out on potential talent, job options for ethnic minority women are unnecessarily restricted and people from different ethnic backgrounds lose out on the opportunity to mix with each other at work – none of which help social cohesion.

3.1 Slower progress in the labour market for women from some ethnic backgrounds

If ethnic minority women's employment is compared to that of ethnic minority men or white women, disadvantage can be hidden because the comparison is with groups who themselves face disadvantage in the labour market. In the snapshot which follows we have made comparisons with white men as well, to give a fuller picture.

Pakistani and Bangladeshi women less likely to be in the labour market, but this is changing for younger generations

Pakistani and Bangladeshi women are less likely to be employed or actively seeking employment than other groups (Table 2). This is particularly true of first generation Pakistani and Bangladeshi women. Among those born in the UK, the proportion who are in the labour market (so-called economically active) is double that of the first generation.

Table 2 Pakistani and Bangladeshi women's attachment to the labour market much higher for those born in the UK

Proportion who are economically active	White British men	White British women	Black Caribbean women	Pakistani women	Bangladeshi women
All working age	83	72	73	30	27
First generation	84	72	71	23	22
Born in the UK	83	72	74	43	44
16–24 year olds	72	65	57	36	38
First generation	64	61	49	26	34
Born in the UK	72	65	58	41	42

Source: 2001 Census commissioned tables, crown copyright 2004.

Tables 3a and 3b show that Pakistani and Bangladeshi women with low qualifications are much less likely to be in the labour market than white British women, particularly when they have dependent children in the household. For example, for those qualified to degree level or above (level 4+), the proportion of Pakistani women with dependent children who are in the labour market is just over half that of equivalent white British women, but for those whose qualifications are less than level 2, the proportion of Pakistani women with dependent children in the labour market falls to only a quarter that of white British women.

It is striking that for those with less than level 2 qualifications without dependent children, nearly eight out of 10 Pakistani and Bangladeshi women are still out of the labour market, compared to three out of 10 equivalent white British women and two out of 10 white British men.

At the other end of the scale, for those with degrees, a further issue for investigation is why **nearly half of Pakistani and Bangladeshi women with dependent children are out of the labour market compared to only a fifth of equivalent white British women and a thirtieth of equivalent white British men**. Even among those without dependent children, a third of Pakistani and Bangladeshi women with degrees are outside the labour market, whereas less than one in five equivalent white British women are out of the labour market⁷. Looking at this from another perspective, of those who are in the labour market, Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women are more qualified on average and more likely to be mothers than white British women (Table 5).

Table 3a Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi parents with low qualifications particularly likely to be out of the labour market

Proportion of those who are economically inactive:	White British men	White British women	Black Caribbean women	Pakistani women	Bangladeshi women
In households with children:					
– qualified to level 4+	3	19	17	53	50
– qualified to level 2 or 3	14	29	31	60	61
– less than level 2 qualified	17	41	40	85	88
In households without children:					
– qualified to level 4+	12	12	14	32	31
– qualified to level 2 or 3	11	14	17	42	39
– less than level 2 qualified	21	30	26	78	76

Notes: Level 1 is equivalent to GCSE grades D – G. Level 2 is equivalent to GCSE grades A – C. Level 3 is equivalent to 'A' level. Level 4 is equivalent to degree level.

Source: 2001 Census commissioned tables, crown copyright 2004.

It should be noted, however, that official statistics on economic inactivity are likely to over estimate the true picture, because they do not include all the Pakistani and Bangladeshi women working from home or helping out in a family business. Although there is a lack of data on the extent of home working, we know from the National Group on Homeworking that Asian women form a significant proportion of homeworkers, often paid less than the minimum wage and with little or no employment protection.

7. It should be noted that 'with children' and 'without children' here means in households with or without dependent children, rather than whether or not the people have ever had children. Those 'without dependent children' therefore includes those that have had children in the past, but do not have dependent children living with them now.

Table 3b Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women with high qualifications more likely to be in the labour market

Proportion of those who are economically active:	White British men	White British women	Black Caribbean women	Pakistani women	Bangladeshi women
In households with children:					
– qualified to level 4+	95	81	83	47	50
– qualified to level 2 or 3	84	71	69	40	39
– less than level 2 qualified	81	59	60	15	12
In households without children:					
– qualified to level 4+	88	88	86	68	69
– qualified to level 2 or 3	88	86	83	58	61
– less than level 2 qualified	78	70	74	22	24

Notes: Level 1 is equivalent to GCSE grades D – G. Level 2 is equivalent to GCSE grades A – C. Level 3 is equivalent to 'A' level. Level 4 is equivalent to degree level.

Source: 2001 Census commissioned tables, crown copyright 2004.

It is also important to note, as mentioned earlier, that a significant minority of those Pakistani and Bangladeshi women who are not in the labour market say that they would like to find a job.

Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women find it harder to get a job than white British women

Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women are at greater risk of being unemployed than their white British counterparts (Table 4). This seems to be more or less as true for those born in the UK as it does for first generation immigrants, though for Pakistani and Bangladeshi women born in the UK there has been some slow improvement compared to the first generation. Even well-qualified young Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women are finding it harder to get jobs than white British women with the same level of qualifications. This is confirmed in research for the Ethnic Minority Task Force that shows a continuing penalty in terms of unemployment for some second-generation ethnic minority women.

“I manage to get to the interviews, but I feel this is because I have an English name, but when I get there, everything suddenly changes and the recruiters are suddenly less enthusiastic.”

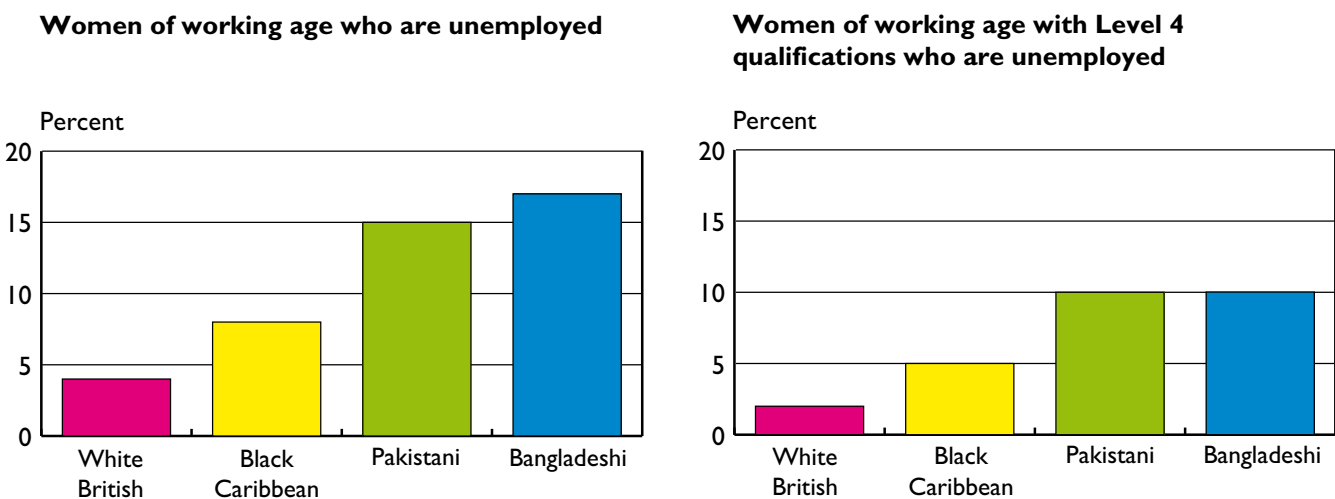
Pakistani woman, public sector

Table 4 Higher unemployment rates for Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women

Proportion who are unemployed	White British men	White British women	Black Caribbean women	Pakistani women	Bangladeshi women
All working age	5	4	8	15	17
First generation	5	6	7	17	18
Second and subsequent generations	5	4	9	13	13
Below level 2 qualifications	7	5	10	24	29
Level 2 or 3 qualifications	5	3	8	12	12
Level 4 qualifications	3	2	5	10	10
16–24 year olds	10	6	13	17	16
First generation	9	10	13	23	17
Second and subsequent generations	10	6	13	15	14
Below level 2 qualifications	18	14	24	30	27
Level 2 or 3 qualifications	6	4	11	12	12
Level 4 qualifications	5	3	7	12	9

Notes: Level 1 is equivalent to GCSE grades D – G. Level 2 is equivalent to GCSE grades A – C. Level 3 is equivalent to 'A' level. Level 4 is equivalent to degree level.

Source: 2001 Census commissioned tables, crown copyright 2004.

Chart 1 Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women more likely to be unemployed

Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women employees are more qualified than white British women employees

The net effect of various groups having different likelihoods of being in the labour market or different probabilities of being able to find a job is that those Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women who are employed are better qualified and more likely to have children than their white British counterparts (Table 5).

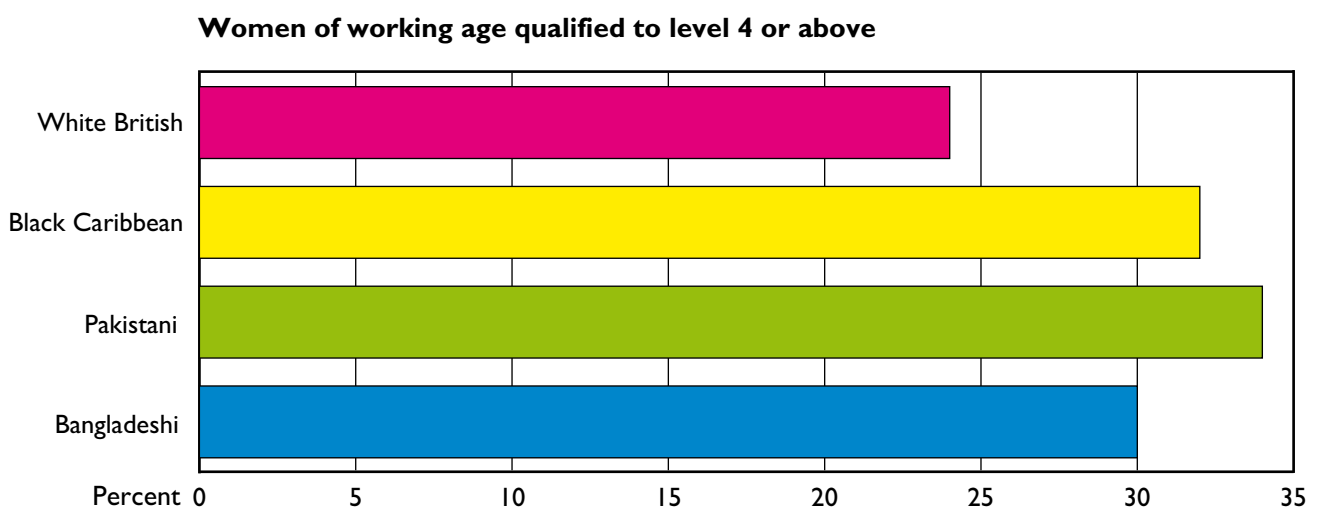
Table 5 Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women in employment are more likely to be mothers and to be better qualified than white British women

Proportion of those in employment who are:	White British men	White British women	Black Caribbean women	Pakistani women	Bangladeshi women
All of working age					
Parents	50	50	70	68	65
Dual parent households	49	41	35	37	55
Single parent households	1	9	35	11	10
Qualified to level 4+	23	24	32	34	30
Have no qualifications	18	17	10	13	15
Among 16–24 year olds					
Qualified to level 4+	14	19	20	22	17
Have no qualifications	11	6	4	9	8

Notes: Level 1 is equivalent to GCSE grades D – G. Level 2 is equivalent to GCSE grades A – C. Level 3 is equivalent to 'A' level. Level 4 is equivalent to degree level.

Source: 2001 Census commissioned tables, crown copyright 2004.

Chart 2 Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women employees better qualified



Pay gaps for Pakistani and Bangladeshi women are worse than for white British women, despite better qualifications

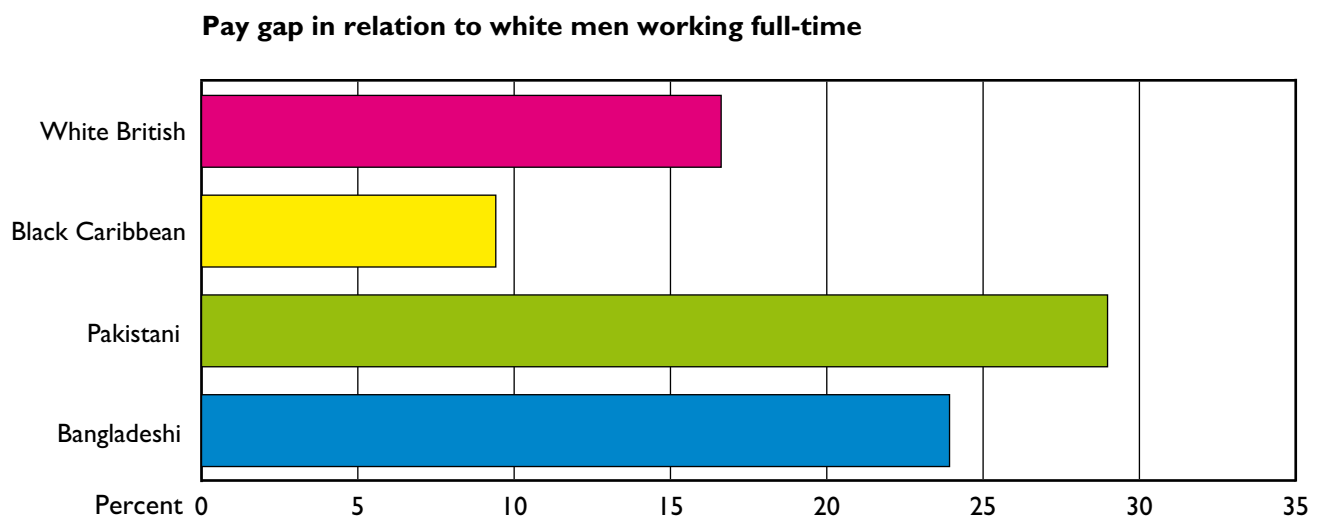
Pakistani and Bangladeshi women face a pay gap in relation to white men that is greater than that faced by white British women (Table 6)⁸. The pay gap for Black Caribbean women is smaller than for white British women, but it would be wrong to assume that this indicates they have better jobs. A relatively large proportion (over half) live in London where pay rates are higher, and over a third are in health and social work, often in the public sector where the gender pay gap is less than average. They are also less likely to take time out of the labour market when they have children, which creates a pay penalty for women over a lifetime.

Table 6 Large pay gaps for Pakistani and Bangladeshi women working full-time

%	White British	Black Caribbean	Pakistani	Bangladeshi
Pay gap in relation to white men working full-time	17	9	28	23

Source: Quarterly Labour Force Survey, 2001–2005.

Chart 3 Large pay gaps for Pakistani and Bangladeshi women working full-time



Part of the reason for the pay gaps is that the higher qualifications of Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women do not translate into higher pay as much as they do for men.

Table 7 Qualifications have little impact on pay gap for women in contrast to men

% pay gap compared to white men with same qualifications	Black Caribbean		Pakistani		Bangladeshi	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
All	9	11	28	20	23	39
Level 3+ qualifications	10	8	26	9	23	13

Notes: Level 1 is equivalent to GCSE grades D – G. Level 2 is equivalent to GCSE grades A – C. Level 3 is equivalent to 'A' level. Level 4 is equivalent to degree level.

Source: Quarterly Labour Force Survey, 2001–2005.

8. The analysis was undertaken for the EOC as part of a research project into ethnic pay gaps for women and men. For the full report see Platt, L (2006) forthcoming.

A lower glass ceiling for Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women

Higher levels of qualifications have not translated into greater proportions of Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women being managers or senior officials. This is true even of Black Caribbean women, who have been in the labour market for many years and are more likely to work full-time than others. Only 9% of Black Caribbean women are in these positions, compared to 19% of white British men and 11% of white British women (Table 8). Pakistani women in particular seem to experience a lower glass ceiling, with only 6% in these jobs.

“The feeling that whatever I do has to be my very best, and so much better than my white counterparts. I feel I am under a much harsher lens and level of scrutiny. My contributions are ignored, silenced or criticised. In the battle for progress, only the strong survive...Is it really any wonder that so few BME women are in positions of authority or control? We have many of the same glass ceilings halting our progress that white women have – only ours are so much lower and harder to break through.” Black Caribbean woman, Researcher

Table 8 Fewer Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women are managers or senior officials

% who are managers or senior officials	White British	Black Caribbean	Pakistani	Bangladeshi
Women	11	9	6	9
Men	19	14	14	11

Source: 2001 Census commissioned tables, crown copyright 2004.

Research for the Ethnic Minority Employment Task Force found that Black Caribbean women are doing reasonably well in some ‘high and low’ professional and managerial jobs⁹. The question is how this can be spread to more sectors and to more managerial and senior official roles.

“Both Westminster and the private sector are still made up of an ‘old boys network’ where initial assumptions about any woman, especially those from an ethnic minority background, are that they are the PA/admin assistant.” Pakistani woman, charity sector

Greater job segregation for Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women

Women and men in general are concentrated into different jobs, but this is even more true for ethnic minorities. Women are more likely to be employed in the public sector – one in three compared to one in six men – but this rises to nearly one in two Black Caribbean women.

Table 9 shows that Black Caribbean and Bangladeshi women are more concentrated in a few occupations than white British women, who themselves are considerably more segregated than white British men. There is also a very high concentration of Bangladeshi men into the restaurant trade. A quarter of Bangladeshi women and a quarter of Pakistani women are in the wholesale and

9. See Heath and Cheung 2006.

retail sectors and nearly 30% of Black Caribbean women are in health and social work. The highest concentration of white British women in any single sector is 18%, in health and social work¹⁰.

Some occupations remain virtual no-go areas for ethnic minority women, though of course smaller numbers limit the data available. As an example – among architects, town planners and surveyors, only 8.8% are white British women and only 0.2% are Black Caribbean women, even though they make up 0.7% of those in employment.

Table 9 High concentrations of ethnic minorities in certain occupations

	White British	Black Caribbean	Pakistani	Bangladeshi
Percentage of men in top five occupations	12	13	26 ¹	53 ¹
Percentage of women in top five occupations for that group	24	29	26	32
Percentage of women in each of the top five occupations	Sales assistants (8) Clerks (5) Care Assistants (4) Other Secretaries (4) Cleaners (4)	Nurses (8) Clerks (7) Care Assistants (6) Sales Assistants (5) Other Secretaries (4)	Sales assistants (12) Clerks (5) Care Assistants (3) Educ assistants (3) Financial clerks (3)	Sales assistants (15) Clerks (6) Educ assistants (5) Financial clerks (3) Retail cashiers (3)

Notes: ¹ The high concentration of Pakistani and in particular Bangladeshi men is due to the concentration of the former as taxi drivers (11%) and sales assistants (7%) and the latter in the restaurant trade as either cooks, waiters or restaurant managers (41%).

Source: 2001 Census commissioned tables, crown copyright 2004.

Different outcomes for Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women in local labour markets

Some women's labour market participation rates and unemployment rates vary according to which part of the country they live. Economic activity rates for Pakistani women range from 23% in Birmingham to 42% in Tower Hamlets, for example, whilst the rate for white British women varies by only one percentage point. Black Caribbean and white British women have a similar variation in economic activity of around 13 percentage points in different parts of the country. But the picture for Bangladeshi women shows more consistency – around a quarter are economically active across different parts of the country (Table 10).

Unemployment rates also vary considerably across the country (Table 10). The figures for Newham and Tower Hamlets are particularly worthy of note, given that these are two of the boroughs where the 2012 Olympic site will be based. A paper for the Ethnic Minority Employment Task Force¹¹ estimates that ethnic minorities will make up 45% of the total working age population for the four London boroughs making up the Olympic area and that currently, far more ethnic minority women than men are identified as not being employed (90,000 compared to 65,000).

10. Census 2001.

11. Olympics Paper by Nahid Majid, presented to The Ethnic Minority Employment Task Force, January 2005.

Table 10 Huge variation in economic activity and unemployment rates across the country

%	White British		Pakistani		Bangladeshi		Black Caribbean	
	EA	U	EA	U	EA	U	EA	U
London	73	4	38	12	27	16	73	8
– Newham	62	7	29	18	25	18	71	10
– Tower Hamlets	70	6	42	21	23	20	68	11
Manchester	61	6	30	16	24	14	66	10
Birmingham	69	5	23	22	22	22	72	10
Bradford	74	4	24	20	22	21	73	6
Leeds	73	4	25	15	25	25	71	6
Leicester	68	6	38	12	26	17	69	9

Notes: EA: Economically active. U: Unemployed.

Source: 2001 Census commissioned tables, crown copyright 2004.

The variations may be due to differences in demographics and qualifications, attitudes towards women's roles, access to resources, the availability of local employment, or effective local strategies to increase employment opportunities for ethnic minority women. But whatever the explanation, it suggests that change is possible – if higher proportions of Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women are working in some parts of the country than others, it should be possible to improve their chances of working elsewhere.

“Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women in work face a bigger pay gap, a lower glass ceiling and greater job segregation than white British women, despite better qualifications.”

Need to spread success more widely

This is a mixed and complex picture. Behind these percentages are individual stories of success as well as frustration. But overall, the picture that emerges is one where the jobs obtained by Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women are more limited than their qualifications suggest should be the case. The evidence from our investigation so far suggests the following priorities for action:

- **Reduce the risk of unemployment facing Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women, whatever their level of qualification.**
- **Make it easier for Pakistani and Bangladeshi women who want to find paid work to break into the labour market.**
- **Improve job opportunities for Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black Caribbean women graduates.**

- Increase the range of occupations in which Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women work.
- Increase the proportion of Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women in managerial and senior official jobs.
- Targeted action in local labour markets, sectors and workplaces which are doing less well than others on any or all of the above measures.

3.2 Some employers more successful than others in employing and promoting black and/or Asian¹² women

From an employer perspective, success in the sense of employing black and Asian women is mixed, despite employers' buy-in to the business case for diversity. Our conclusions are based on survey interviews in 800 workplaces in labour markets¹³ across the country where the resident population contains a proportion of black and Asian people that is equal to or higher than the national average. From this survey, we have defined five levels of 'success' in employing black and Asian women¹⁴ – based on whether the proportion of black and Asian women they are employing is greater than or equal to the proportion of black and Asian women in the economically active population of their local labour market, and on whether they are employing any black or Asian women in senior management.

Those employers defined in this survey as not employing black or Asian women are not in this position because there are very few of these women in the population. Nor are employers being given the label of 'not employing to the level of their market' because there are high numbers of these women remaining outside the labour market. The criterion is based on the proportion who are economically active in the local area, rather than on the number living there. It should also be noted that all the employers interviewed are workplaces with more than 25 employees, so this analysis is not affected by very small employers. We recognise the importance of considering the issues for smaller employers in the future.

On this basis, Table II shows the distribution of 'success' in employing black and Asian women for different sized organisations, public and private, in a variety of sectors and regions. There are some notable differences. **Only 36% of private sector employers in these areas are employing black and Asian women at levels above their presence in the local labour market, compared to 62% of public sector employers.**

12. See footnote 14.

13. These are defined as 'Travel-to-Work Areas' that segment England and Wales into individual areas within which about 75 percent or more of the working population both live and work (although in a few cases with very large working populations this figure is closer to 70%). For the purposes of this type of analysis this is a reasonable approximation of the local labour market available to employers.

14. Employers were asked about black women and Asian women. The pilot phase of the survey confirmed that many employers don't distinguish between Black Caribbean and Black African or between Pakistani and Bangladeshi employees. They were therefore asked separately about black women and about Asian women. In this document the responses relate to those that said something about either Asian women or black women.

Table II Some employers have no black and Asian women in their workforce whilst others have proportionately more than are economically active in their area

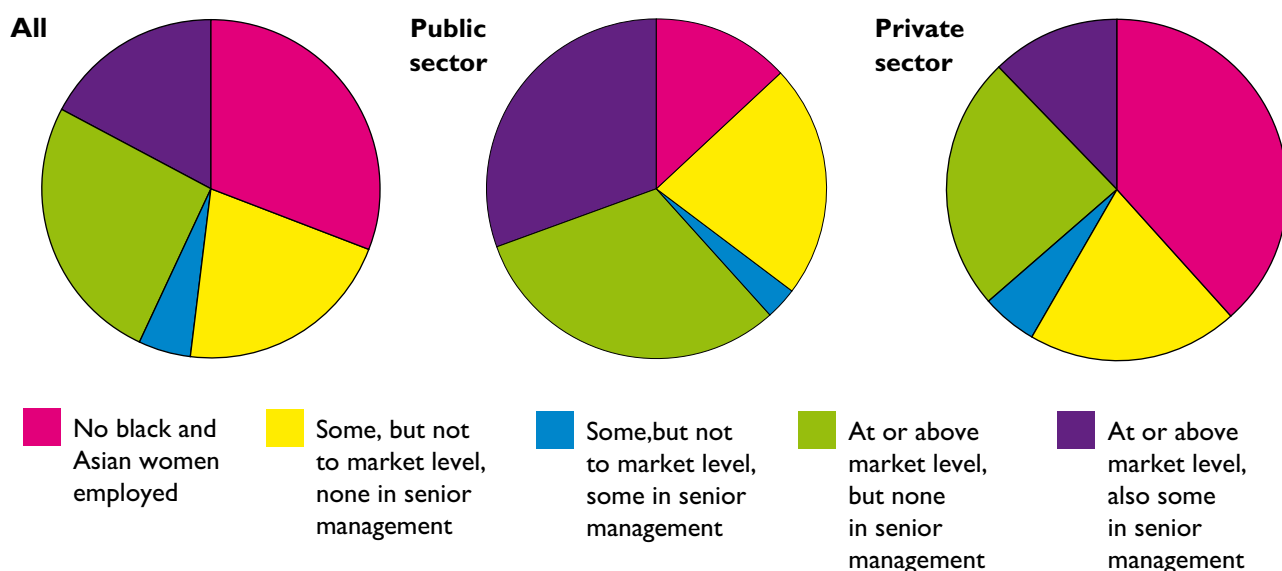
% of employers in each category	No black and Asian women employed	Some, but not to market level, none in senior management	Some, but not to market level, some in senior management	At or above market level, but none in senior management	At or above market level, also some in senior management	Total
All	31	21	5	26	17	100
Large, 250+	6	23	10	36	25	100
Medium, 50–249	21	26	6	26	21	100
Smaller, but 25–49	41	16	3	26	14	100
Public sector	13	22	3	31	30	100
Private sector	38	20	5	24	12	100
Business services	25	24	9	32	10	100
Education	15	34	4	26	21	100
Health/social work ¹	16	13	8	27	36	100
Hotels/restaurants	22	17	1	39	21	100
Manufacturing	50	25	1	15	9	100
Public administration	11	16	1	48	25	100
Wholesale/retail trade	43	15	0	23	18	100
Other	60	19	7	9	6	100
London/SE	21	30	8	21	21	100
Elsewhere	36	16	3	29	16	100

Notes: ¹ Health and social work and other community, social and personal.

Source: Ethnic Minority Women at Work survey.

Chart 4 Range of success in employing black and Asian women

Percentage of employers in each category



The evidence also shows clearly, however, that there is also huge variation in the success of organisations *within* similar size bands or similar sectors. This has consequences for the organisations themselves in terms of accessing the widest pool of talent possible, for the women in terms of limited choice, and for society in terms of greater segregation between work places than may be desirable from a community cohesion point of view.

There is an urgent need for action that would spread success more widely, especially as about three-quarters of employers have no plans to introduce initiatives to improve recruitment or retention of black or Asian women.

An added layer of segregation within organisations?

Although there are no official statistics on this, a consistent theme from the ethnic minority women responding to our investigation is that they are channeled into equality roles, even when this is not their first choice of profession.

One Muslim woman, now working as an equality officer in higher education, originally qualified as a chemical engineer in 1989. She felt sidelined by the company she worked for, in favour of white men, and resigned on grounds of racism at the time of the Gulf war. She has not been able to get other engineering jobs.

“I gather people like me get noticed more in diversity work and as such landed here.”

Another Muslim woman, based in a part of the country with a largely white population, now works as an equality officer in local government after already re-training as a social worker because she could not get any interviews with firms of solicitors after graduating in law.

3.3 Spreading success

We need to spread success: from employers who manage to attract and promote black and Asian women to those that do not; between parts of the country and between sectors. Evidence in the next sections of this report highlight some of the reasons for the current patchy picture of progress as well as the factors associated with success.

4. Influence of attitudes and beliefs on the employment relationship

4.1 Employers views are mixed

In our survey of employers in areas of above average black and Asian population, there were mixed views about why black and Asian women were not progressing faster or succeeding in the recruitment process to the degree that might be expected¹⁵.

Table 12 Half of employers believe there are difficulties because of black/Asian women's characteristics, the way they present themselves or family/caring commitments

Of organisations employing at least some black or Asian women	%	%
A. Tendency to locate difficulty within the women (agree with any two of following):		20
Poor written English limits applications	18	
Lack of work experience accounts for low level of interviews	15	
Black/Asian women applicants tend to be under-qualified	14	
Black/Asian women tend to have poor spoken English at interview	14	
Black/Asian women are not as likely to want to progress as white women	7	
Black/Asian women applicants tend to be over-qualified	3	
B Tendency to think presentational problems are difficulty (agree with any two of following):		27
Black/Asian women tend to lack confidence at interview	25	
The rate of progression of black/Asian women is limited because they do not push themselves enough	22	
Black/Asian women tend not to express enough interest in the organisation at interview	10	
Black/Asian women tend to be over-confident at interview	8	
C Tendency to believe that their experience shows black/Asian women more likely to be affected by family/caring issues than white women (agree with at least one of the following):		35
Black/Asian women more likely than white women to leave because of pressure from their families	26	
Black/Asian women struggle to progress because they are held back by family commitments	21	
Black/Asian women more likely than white women to leave because of childcare or other caring responsibilities	13	
Tend to locate difficulties in women's characteristics (A)		20
Tend to locate difficulties in this or the way they present themselves (A) or (B)		36
Tend to locate difficulties in these aspects or family issues (A) or (B) or (C)		49

Source: Ethnic Minority Women at Work survey.

15. We have asked these questions separately in respect of black women and Asian women. There were some differences in the responses, which will be published in the full report of the Employer Survey later in the year. See Adams, L (2006) forthcoming.

Of those who actually employed some black or Asian women – over 600 of the organisations we interviewed – about half (49%) located difficulties either with the women’s abilities or characteristics, the way in which they come across or because they believe them to face stronger pressure to take on family caring roles. The detail is shown in Table 12.

“Ethnic minority women tend to have better levels of qualifications than their white female counterparts, but have less experience.” Small employer

“As a general comment I would say that both ethnic minority men and women do not push themselves forward enough. They seem to be content to stay in a position they feel comfortable in, they are quite happy to continue doing the same job.” Large employer

These employers also expressed a range of opinions about whether or not difficulties arose because of beliefs and attitudes within the organisation, in other words recognising that difficulties could arise because of the organisation rather than just being down to the women. This is shown in Table 13.

Table 13 Nearly a third of employers think there may be difficulties because of beliefs and attitudes within the organisation

Of organisations employing at least some black or Asian women	%	%
Tendency to believe that there are difficulties within the organisation in that they agree with at least one of the following:		31
Some men might find it difficult to be managed by a black or Asian woman	19	
Muslim women wearing traditional dress would find it difficult to work here	9	
Our staff are not able to get the best out of black/Asian women at interview	8	
Black/Asian women would not want to work in this establishment	4	

Source: Ethnic Minority Women at Work survey.

We have grouped a range of disparate views here, but it is interesting to note that if one combines the attitudes that place difficulties on the characteristics/presentation of the women themselves ((A) and (B) in Table 12) and those that tend to say there is a potential difficulty with the organisation in Table 13 then:

- **48% do not see difficulties in either the women or the organisation.**
- **21% see difficulties in the women, but not in the organisation.**
- **18% see difficulties in both.**
- **13% do not see difficulties in the women, but do in the organisation.**

These views do not appear to have a great effect on the degree to which they are employing black and Asian women or the likelihood of them being employed at senior level. The proportions holding these various attitudes are similar for each of the categories of employer identified in Table 11.

However, although it is hard to quantify, Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women are very aware of the stereotypes held about them:

“I come from a working class Bangladeshi background and am one of four daughters all encouraged to study and develop careers. There is a lot of negative press about the ability of Bangladeshis who seem to be portrayed in the media and academic research as destined to fail, fatalistic and repressed.” Bangladeshi woman working in local government

“I find that as I have an English name and speak very well, I am assumed to be English white but when I attend the interview, their faces, expressions and handshakes says it all. This kind of attitude has deterred me from entering the legal field and has kept me from my chosen profession.”

Black Caribbean woman, secretarial – legal

Some of the women who have been in touch with the EOC say that they felt accepted in the workplace until they were promoted into a more senior role, when they started to experience more negative reactions from white colleagues, confirming the findings of the employer survey, where a significant minority were concerned that some men in the organisation might find it hard to accept a black or Asian female manager.

Noreen's story

Noreen's family¹⁶ are from Bangladesh. She has a degree in social sciences and has been working since the age of 17. She told the EOC that her father always encouraged her to get a good education and have a successful career. She has had to deal with the stereotyped assumption that Asian women will leave jobs when they get married and have children.

“Just like the white counterparts, marriage happens and you continue to work, look out for promotions and go on rather than leave your job.”

She now works at management level in local government but feels that she has had to work “doubly hard” to prove “her worth”. She also felt that white colleagues resented her promotion.

“When you are lower than them – white counterparts – they are very friendly, but once you become their equal, the equation changes.”

4.2 Negative experiences of young women

Many young Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women will have experienced directly, or heard from their contemporaries, experiences that suggest negative attitudes about them. This may limit the employment choices they make. Table 14, based on our survey of women under 35 years old in employment, shows some striking differences between the experiences of Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women, compared to white British women.

A large minority of young women experience racist or sexist comments at work. At the extreme, more than one in every six Black Caribbean and Pakistani young women in employment often hear either racist or sexist comments and nearly one in four Black Caribbean young women employees experience both at least sometimes. Black Caribbean women are most likely to experience racist comments.

More specifically, one in every six young Pakistani women employees and one in eight young Bangladeshi and Black Caribbean women employees have often either been asked at job interviews about their plans for marriage or children, or asked by their employers what their partner/family think about them working, compared to only one in 17 young white British women. About one in five Pakistani and Bangladeshi women have also experienced negative attitudes because of their religious dress.

16. Name has been changed to protect identity.

Many of the ethnic minority women who contact the EOC find it difficult to pinpoint the exact cause of the discrimination they have experienced:

“Why am I suffering? Is it because I had a baby? Is it because I’m Asian? Or Muslim wearing a hijab? Or everything above? I feel I have been treated very unfairly and it makes me feel so unworthy. Yet I know I am very skilled at my job.” Bangladeshi woman

Table 14 Black Caribbean, Bangladeshi and Pakistani women experience more discrimination and disadvantage in the labour market than white British women

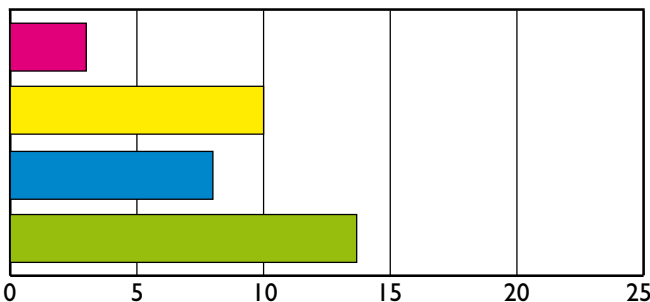
% of young women employees in each ethnic group	Experienced often				Experienced often or sometimes			
	WB	BC	B	P	WB	BC	B	P
Racist comments being made about you or others	5	12	5	14	9	33	19	23
Sexist comments being made about you or others	8	14	4	11	25	33	21	23
<i>Both racist and sexist comments</i>	4	10	3	9	8	23	12	17
<i>Either racist or sexist comments</i>	10	16	7	16	28	43	29	29
Being asked at interviews about your plans for marriage or children	3	10	8	13	14	24	21	26
Being asked by your employer what your partner/family think about you working	4	9	9	12	14	17	19	25
<i>Either of above two</i>	6	13	13	16	23	29	27	33
Negative attitudes being shown towards you for wearing religious dress	2	4	7	14	3	8	20	22
Difficulty finding a job	16	24	27	24	34	54	49	56
Taking a job at a lower level because no one would employ you at the level you were qualified for	5	16	18	22	26	35	36	41
Seeing less experienced/less qualified people promoted above you	5	15	8	17	21	31	25	37
<i>Any of above three</i>	21	36	35	35	53	69	59	69

Notes: WB=white British; BC=Black Caribbean; B=Bangladeshi; P=Pakistani.

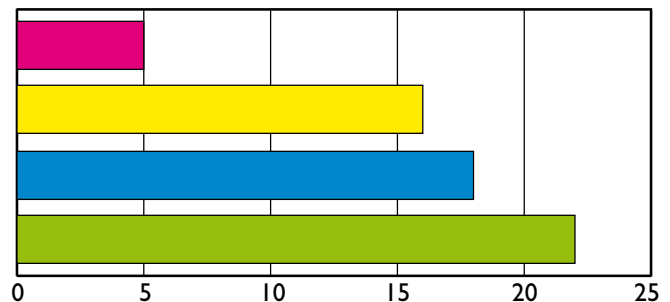
Source: Botcherby, S (2006) Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black Caribbean women and employment survey: aspirations, experiences and choices.

Chart 5 Discrimination and disadvantage

Percentage often being asked at interview about your plans for marriage or children



Percentage often taking a job at a lower level because no one would employ you at the level you were qualified for



■ White British women
 ■ Black Caribbean women
 ■ Bangladeshi women
 ■ Pakistani women

There are, of course, a wide variety of reasons why people have difficulty finding a job or getting promotion. However, as indicated in the bottom part of Table 14, the proportions of young Black Caribbean, Bangladeshi and Pakistani women experiencing various difficulties is far greater than that of young white British women. For example, about one in five young Black Caribbean, Bangladeshi or Pakistani women employees have often had to take a job at a lower level because no one would employ them at the level they were qualified for, compared to only one in twenty young white British women employees. Over one in three of the young ethnic minority groups of women employees we surveyed had experience of this – more than 50% higher than the proportion of young white British women who had.

“I have tried to get work as an HR assistant and other senior administrative posts. Instead I end up with menial manual positions although I have significant experience behind me and a masters in Strategic Human Resource Management.”

Black Caribbean woman, Nottingham, seeking work via employment agencies

Implicit in the data in Table 14 is that, of those experiencing labour market disadvantage, there are more among the young Black Caribbean, Bangladeshi and Pakistani women employees with multiple negative experiences than is the case for their white British counterparts. It is not surprising that many ethnic minority women feel they have to be better than others to achieve success.

4.3 Discrimination holds back Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black Caribbean women, despite their high aspirations

Despite feeling that they do not face a level playing field as they embark on their careers, young Black Caribbean, Bangladeshi and Pakistani women in work have high aspirations, shown in Table 15.

Ethnic minority women entrepreneurs in the North West of England cited difficulties finding or progressing in employment as one of the factors that made them decide to start their own business. Having the flexibility to combine work with family commitments was another important factor.

Ethnic Minority Business Forum North West, Feedback report from Black Minority Ethnic Women's Consultation event, July 2005

Much higher proportions of young Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women employees in our survey aspired to be their own boss than was the case for equivalent white British women. Of the remainder about 40 percent of all the groups aspire to be senior managers or senior professionals, although it is notable that Pakistani and Bangladeshi women are more likely to aspire to the latter and Black Caribbean and white British to the former¹⁷. Similar proportions of young Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women employees are aiming for promotion in the near future as their white British counterparts. Although there are one or two interesting differences in the proportions that say they are likely to do particular things to achieve promotion, the broad picture is similar for all groups. There is certainly no evidence to suggest that young Black Caribbean, Pakistani or Bangladeshi women employees are less motivated or less prepared to take steps to secure promotion than white British women.

Table 15 Ethnic minority women have similar aspirations to white British women

% of young women employees in each ethnic group	White British	Black Caribbean	Pakistani	Bangladeshi
Position ultimately aiming for:				
Senior management	25	23	17	15
Middle management	13	11	9	14
Senior professional	6	7	15	12
Professional/Tradesperson ¹	17	18	14	17
Supervisor/Team leader	14	13	13	10
Own Boss	11	17	20	20
None of these	14	10	12	11
Aiming for promotion in near future	46	51	48	42
Of those aiming for promotion, proportion prepared to²:				
Take extra responsibilities	97	92	90	89
Undertake training	93	94	94	98
Study for qualifications	78	86	82	87
Work longer hours	77	68	58	67
Change jobs	59	83	66	62
Move to a new location	38	49	46	33
Work away from home ³	48	50	39	35

Notes: ¹. The prompt on the card was 'fully qualified professional or tradesperson'. ². Very likely/likely to do this. ³. The statement was 'work away from home for short periods'.

Source: Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black Caribbean women and employment survey.

Young Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women are thus motivated to succeed, but their strategies for doing so may be affected by hearing about the negative experiences of their older friends and relatives. Certainly there is awareness on the part of young people that they will have particular hurdles to overcome.

17. The figures in the table on aiming for senior professional and senior management jobs appear lower for some groups compared to others because of the differences in the proportions wanting to be their own boss or saying 'none of these'. The 40 percent figure is the percent aspiring for senior management or senior professional excluding those saying that they want to be their own boss or 'none of these'.

Already at 16, ethnic minorities are more likely than white young people to expect difficulties at work. The top half of Table 16 shows high proportions of ethnic minority boys and girls believing that it is harder for women, black or Asian people to get to the top. Over half of Pakistani and Bangladeshi girls believe this and four out of five Black Caribbean girls think it, compared to a third of white British girls.

Already at age 16, they are beginning to see themselves as likely to be segregated into certain types of work. They believe some jobs are not available to them simply because of their sex, race and/or faith. It is worrying enough that as many as a quarter of white British boys and girls think that there are certain jobs they cannot apply for because of their sex, but **over half of Black Caribbean girls and nearly two-thirds of Pakistani and Bangladeshi girls are ruling out jobs because of their sex, ethnicity or faith**. Some Pakistani and Bangladeshi women may prefer not to work in certain environments because of their religious beliefs, but the discussions in our focus groups with 16 year old girls suggests that they rule out jobs because of a fear of isolation:

“I think there were too many white people, too many men...people different to me. I think I would find it a little bit intimidating, like I wouldn't fit in. When you feel out of place like when you don't belong, like you feel outnumbered by them.”

Bangladeshi girl, London focus group

Table 16 Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi 16 year olds believe it is difficult to get jobs because of their sex and/or race/faith

% of 16 year olds in each ethnic group agreeing/disagreeing with statements	White British		Black Caribbean Girls (boys sample too small)	Pakistani		Bangladeshi	
	Boys	Girls		Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
(A) Agree that 'It's harder for women to get to the top in jobs'	20	28	59	27	44	35	47
(B) Agree that 'It's harder for black and Asian people to get to the top in jobs'	15	8	66	35	33	48	31
(C) Disagree that 'It's just as easy for a black or Asian person to get the job that they want, as it is for a white person'	23	21	70	50	54	53	44
Agree that 'It's harder for women/black/Asian to get to the top in jobs' (A) or (B)	30	33	79	51	56	66	55
Agree that 'It's harder for black or Asian to get to the top in jobs or not as easy for black/Asian to get job they want' (B) or (C)	36	25	79	66	65	73	56

(D) Agree that 'I feel there are certain jobs I can't apply for because of my ethnic background'	17	6	38	39	36	36	33
(E) Agree that 'I feel there are certain jobs I can't apply for because of my religious faith'	12	6	21	48	46	41	46
(F) Feel there are certain jobs can't apply for because of ethnic background or religious faith (D) or (E)	22	11	44	61	57	51	55
(G) Agree that 'I feel there are certain jobs I can't apply for because I am a male/female'	24	26	30	37	38	21	38
Feel there are certain jobs can't apply for because male/female or because of ethnic background or religious faith (F) or (G)	36	33	55	70	65	53	65
Feel there are certain jobs can't apply for because male/female and feel there are ones can't apply for because of ethnic background or religious faith (F) and (G)	11	5	19	28	31	19	28

Source: Ahead of the Game: changing aspirations of young ethnic minority women.

We do not know what impact this has on the decision by very high proportions of Pakistani and Bangladeshi women to stay outside the labour market, but it is certainly part of the context in which such decisions are made.

For those who want to find work, it is likely to be part of the reason why they end up concentrated into a narrow range of occupations. Ethnic minority women's choices of job and career are particularly likely to be influenced by those jobs perceived to be 'safe'.

Evidence from our surveys gives further insight into those factors which are particularly important to young Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black Caribbean women when they are deciding where they want to work.

There is little difference between groups in how they feel about pay and conditions (Table 17). Although young women from the ethnic minority groups we surveyed are more likely in general to think benefits are 'very important', the pattern of priorities is similar. There may, however, be differences in how they interpret 'flexible working conditions', 'proximity to home' or a 'job that people look up to'. Pakistani and Bangladeshi women do have a preference for jobs near to home. Transport, childcare and careers advice may be areas of policy to consider in widening the range of jobs open to them.

Table 17 Factors which are important in choice of job

% of young women in each ethnic group rating the following as important:	Very important				Very/Fairly important			
	WB	BC	B	P	WB	BC	B	P
Pay	63	75	73	73	97	96	96	95
Flexible working conditions	60	69	70	68	91	95	97	96
Opportunities for progression	56	68	64	68	88	95	92	93
Proximity to home	40	44	61	50	81	79	93	86
A job that people look up to	30	48	57	49	72	81	86	86

Notes: WB=white British; BC=Black Caribbean; B=Bangladeshi; P=Pakistani.

Source: Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black Caribbean women and employment survey.

Table 18 shows that the presence of other ethnic minority women in the organisation and at senior level is very important to young Black Caribbean, Bangladeshi and Pakistani women employees, as is making it explicitly clear that applications are welcome from all ethnic groups. Their choice of employer is clearly influenced by the image presented by the organisation in terms of workforce diversity. Encouragingly, such things are also fairly important to large proportions of white British women.

It is also noticeable that women from all three ethnic minority groups are even more likely than white women to cite the importance of flexible working.

Table 18 To attract black and Asian women, organisations need to demonstrate workplace diversity

% of young women in each ethnic group rating the following as important:	Very important				Very/Fairly important			
	WB	BC	B	P	WB	BC	B	P
The employer makes it clear that they welcome applications from all ethnic groups	24	54	52	56	59	82	90	87
Presence of ethnic minority women in the workforce	8	38	34	40	44	77	83	72
Presence of women in senior management	21	37	35	37	60	72	74	67
Presence of ethnic minority women in senior management	16	28	22	23	47	70	69	65
Friends or family working in the same place	3	7	9	9	16	21	31	26

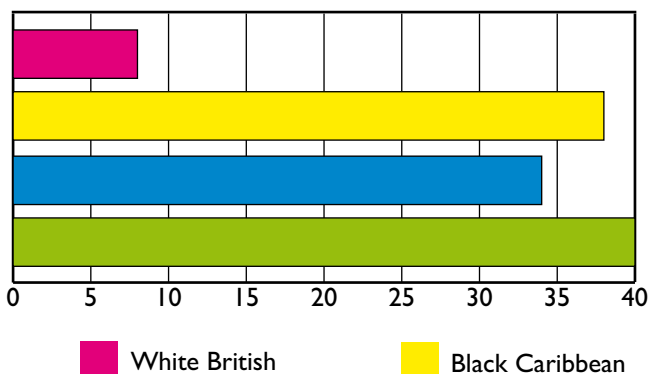
Notes: WB=white British; BC=Black Caribbean; B=Bangladeshi; P=Pakistani.

Source: Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black Caribbean women and employment survey.

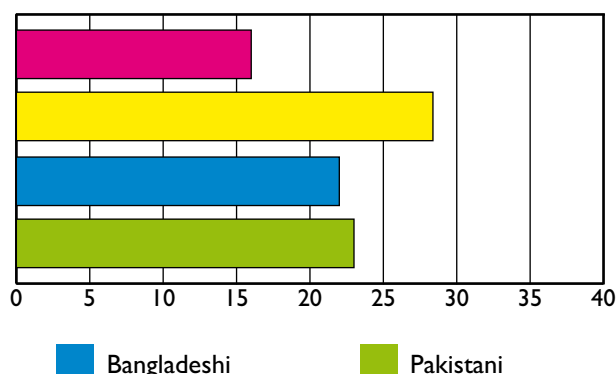
As we have seen, there is a polarisation between employers who are not employing any – or very few – black or Asian women and those that are. Nearly 80 percent are not employing them in senior management positions. Furthermore, the expectations and plans of employers are divided (Table 19). A large proportion of employers (about 55%) do not expect the proportion of black and Asian women in their workforce to increase, despite the demographic changes that are projected. This is about as true of employers not currently employing in line with the market as it is of those already

Chart 6 Importance of presence of ethnic minority women in choosing an employer

Percentage of women employees rating the presence of ethnic minority women in the workforce as very important



Percentage of women employees rating the presence of ethnic minority women in senior management as very important



doing so. Furthermore, almost double the proportion of employers already employing black/Asian women to the level of the local labour market or employing them in senior manager roles expect to introduce new initiatives to improve the recruitment and progression of black/Asian women as those not employing to such levels. **If nothing is done to change this situation, the concentration of black and Asian women in a narrow range of workplaces is likely to increase.**

Table 19 Those already employing proportionately more black/Asian women than in their local market most likely to introduce new initiatives to improve their recruitment or progression

% of each category of employer	All	No black and Asian women employed	Some, but not to market level, none in senior management	Some, but not to market level, some in senior management*	At or above market level, but none in senior management	At or above market level, also some in senior management
Over next five years expect the proportion of black or Asian women in our workforce to increase	46	41	52	50	46	44
Over next five years expect to introduce new initiatives to improve the recruitment and progression of black/Asian women	28	20	24	38	32	39

Source: Ethnic Minority Women at Work survey.
* small sample size

4.4 Conclusions

Mismatch of views

There is a potential mismatch between some employer views, based on their interpretation of employing black and Asian women of all ages, and those of younger Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women about themselves. This could contribute to the sense of disadvantage that large proportions of young women employees express (Table 14), which in turn could contribute to the sense among young people that they will have to work harder than others to succeed and that some jobs are ruled out for them, simply because of their sex, ethnicity or faith (Table 16). A summary of some of the data we have presented is shown in figure 2.

Figure 2 Mismatch of views

Young Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women say this about themselves...	... but a significant minority of employers ¹⁸
Parents support them in having a career rather than just looking after family: View of over 90% of these women at age 16 (section 2.1)	Families hold these women back – over a third of employers have tendency to think this (Table 12)
They are as likely to feel confident as white girls at age 16 (section 2.1)	These women lack confidence at interview – a quarter say this (Table 12)
They are ambitious: These under-35 women employees are slightly more likely than white British women employees to aspire to being their own boss or senior manager/professional (Table 15)	These women lack ambition – over a fifth say the rate of progression of black/Asian women is limited because they do not push themselves enough
Large proportions of Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi under 35 women employees feel...	
They suffer racism/sexism (30–40%), discriminatory treatment (30%) and more say they often experience disadvantages in the labour market than white British employees (35% compared to 20%) (Table 14)	
One in five working Pakistani and Bangladeshi women under 35 have heard negative comments about their religious dress at work	Nearly nine in 10 employers say there would be no problem for women wearing hijab in their organisation
And 16 year olds think they have to...	... despite common employer views that
Work harder. 80% of Black Caribbean girls and over half of Pakistani and Bangladeshi girls think it is harder to get to the top if you are a woman/black/Asian (Table 16)	People are appointed and promoted on merit
Rule out some jobs. Half of Black Caribbean girls and two-thirds of Pakistani and Bangladeshi girls think there are some jobs they cannot apply for just because of their sex/ethnicity/faith (Table 16)	We welcome everyone

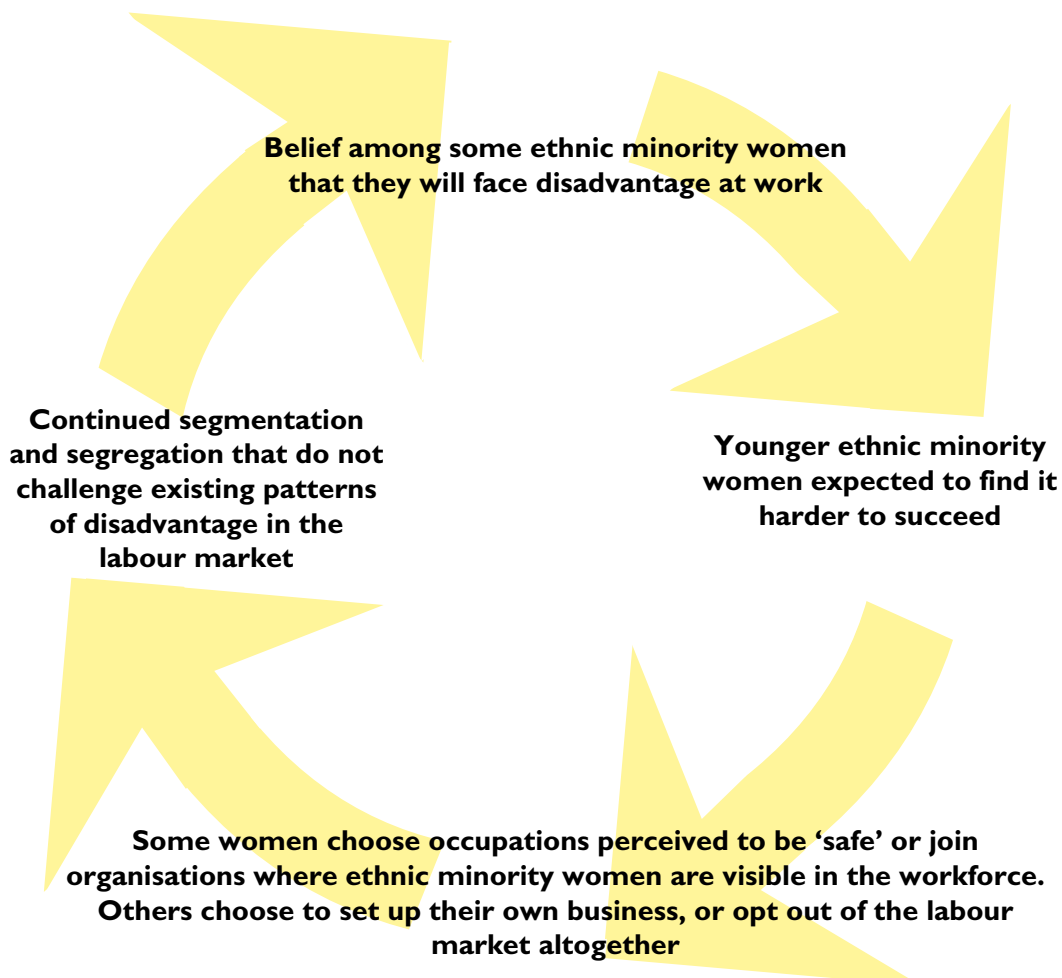
18. Employers of black/Asian women in areas of above average or above black and Asian population.

Vicious circle of segregation

Our focus groups with Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi young women at 16 suggest that their perceptions about the labour market and what futures are open to them are affected by stereotyped attitudes and beliefs. The quantitative data in our survey of 16 year olds also indicates large proportions think that adults judge them by the colour of their skin: 31% of Black Caribbean girls, 19% of Pakistani girls and 16% of Bangladeshi girls. They are attracted to employers who are already demonstrating that they welcome staff from a range of different ethnic backgrounds: Saying this is very important in choosing a job are 73% of Black Caribbean girls, 56% of Pakistani girls and 61% of Bangladeshi girls (compared to 38% of white British girls).

Therefore, there is a risk that a vicious circle of perceptions and real experiences could result in continued segmentation and segregation, with ethnic minority women avoiding some sectors or organisations. Others may choose to start their own business, which means employers lose out on their talent. Others opt out of the labour market altogether, with economic consequences for themselves and their families. This cycle makes it harder for Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women to fulfil their aspirations and to raise their income levels. This in turn has a negative impact on child poverty and social cohesion. It also makes it harder for employers who do not have many black and Asian women working for them at the moment to attract them in, in order to reap the business benefits of a diverse workforce. This potentially negative cycle is illustrated in figure 3.

Figure 3 Vicious circle of segregation



Key trigger points

The vicious circle described above is only part of the picture. The Equalities Review interim report identified that key points in people's lives can trigger disadvantage. These were termed trigger episodes. Further investigation is needed to understand the significance of pathways of trigger episodes affecting ethnic minority women's choices about work. From the evidence of our investigation so far, critical points include when decisions are made about subjects studied at school, choices about further or higher education, entering the labour market for the first time, starting a family and taking on caring responsibilities for other adults in the family. Public policy has not always been sufficiently sensitive to different family patterns in different communities at the different trigger points identified above. To explain the patchy outcomes described in section 3, there is a particular need to investigate trigger points for low-qualified Pakistani and Bangladeshi women who are outside the labour market but want to find a job, for those with higher qualifications who are outside the labour market but want to find a job and for those in jobs for which they are over-qualified. There is also a need to investigate further the factors at each trigger point that lead to Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women being concentrated in particular sectors.

Further investigation would help to explain three things:

- The high rates of unemployment for Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women who are seeking work – among both higher and lower qualified.
- The higher proportions of these groups reporting difficulty in obtaining jobs.
- The fact that higher qualifications do not translate into higher pay or senior level jobs for Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women to the same degree as men.

We need to understand more about the impact of direct and indirect discrimination and gaps in services that may restrict job opportunities for ethnic minority women, and identify any differential impact of these factors in particular local labour markets and within particular organisations. Detailed quantitative life and work history research exploring the reasons for the choices that women have made at different points in their lives may be particularly helpful.

“The presence of other ethnic minority women in the organisation and at senior level is very important to young Black Caribbean, Bangladeshi and Pakistani women employees, as is making it explicitly clear that applications are welcome from all ethnic groups. Their choice of employer is clearly influenced by the image presented by the organisation in terms of workforce diversity.”

5. Employer practices: what works?

This section includes examples of good practice by some employers, along with further analysis of our employer survey, which tell us more about the most effective ways to ensure black and Asian women are represented in the workforce at all levels.

5.1 Initiatives specific to black and Asian women's employment

We have identified some promising approaches by employers that could help prevent further polarisation and spread success in employing black and Asian women. The tables in this section come from our survey of employers with over 25 employees in England in areas of above average black and Asian populations, whereas the case studies come from individual employers who have been in touch with us to tell us about specific initiatives. Among employers in areas with significant black and Asian populations, there is a relationship between those who have been proactive and the degree to which they actually employ black and Asian women, and have black and Asian women in senior management positions (Table 20).

The specific actions included in the survey are not the whole explanation – a third of those not employing any black and Asian women have some of these measures in place and a third of those employing black and Asian women beyond the level they are in the labour market and in senior management do not. However, the correlation is quite striking and prompts questions about how successful initiatives could be spread more widely. Some measures are less applicable for smaller employers, but the correlation between specific measures and good outcomes is evident even when the smaller employers in our survey are excluded.

Pre-employment positive action at ITV

“The scheme helped me get my foot in the door and show people what I can do – I don’t think I would have got here otherwise.” Sarah-Jayne Hallworth, technical operative, ITV

The North West Foundation Placement Scheme, a joint venture between ITV and its training partners, provides ethnic minority people with one year’s work-based pre-employment training, most of it at Granada in Manchester. Throughout the year the trainees receive monthly personal development sessions and formal training to help develop their skills, knowledge and career prospects. As well as their line manager, an internal buddy and an external mentor support each trainee.

Three out of 10 ethnic minority women trainees were offered permanent jobs before finishing the scheme, two of them with ITV. Sarah-Jayne Hallworth has become a news and media technical operative, working on sound and lighting – she is one of only three females in the department, and the only ethnic minority female.

Table 20 Actions by employers which appear to make a difference: specific to black and Asian women

% of each category of employer	All	No black and Asian women employed	Some, but not to market level, none in senior management	Some, but not to market level, some in senior management*	At or above market level, but none in senior management	At or above market level, also some in senior management
Taken one or more of following actions	49	34	48	50	54	65
Provide mentoring for ethnic minority women	28	17	34	33	27	40
Provide support networks for ethnic minority women	26	17	30	25	25	38
Provide leadership or management development schemes targeted at ethnic minority women	20	14	18	19	22	34
Taken any action to increase the number of applications from black or Asian women	17	6	18	11	21	28
Have targets for the recruitment of black and Asian women	15	12	13	10	18	18
Have targets for progression of black and Asian women	8	8	7	2	10	11

Source: Ethnic Minority Women at Work survey.

* small sample size

5.2 General equality and diversity initiatives

Table 21 shows a similar picture in respect of more general equality and diversity initiatives, though the association with success is less pronounced than it is for actions specific to black and Asian women. Again the pattern is similar, but less pronounced if smaller employers are excluded.

National Grid Transco, Pertemps and Jobcentre Plus

In 2005, as the nationally appointed recruitment agency for National Grid Transco, Pertemps along with Jobcentre Plus were asked to help recruit 800 staff for a new call centre/admin hub operation in Northampton. National Grid Transco has set itself a national target to ensure that 20% of its workforce is made up of employees from minority groups – (including people with disabilities, lone parents and other groups as well as ethnic minorities). With the help of local Jobcentre Plus outreach workers, Pertemps identified where the main concentrations of ethnic minority communities were located in Northampton. Rather than use traditional recruitment methods, Pertemps staff went to these areas, handing out marketing materials, speaking directly to people on the street and placed posters in local community centres. Other proactive measures included: one-to-one interviews with the most disadvantaged candidates to provide support and advice through the recruitment process; having a presence at local recruitment fairs promoting the vacancies; a scheme asking people to ‘Recommend a Friend’ for a reward of £75 which proved to be very successful; adverts in Eastern Eye newspaper; and radio adverts on Leicester-based Sabras radio, using a mix of Hindi and English.

Labour market data for Northampton indicate that 6% of workers are from an ethnic minority. Out of the campaign to fill 800 jobs, National Grid Transco recruited a workforce with 22% of employees from ethnic minority groups. Overall, the workforce at National Grid is 57% female.

“There is a relationship between employers who have been proactive and the degree to which they actually employ black and Asian women, and have black and Asian women in senior management positions.”

Table 21 General equality approaches by employers may also be effective

% of each category of employer	All	No black and Asian women employed	Some, but not to market level, none in senior management	Some, but not to market level, some in senior management*	At or above market level, but none in senior management	At or above market level, also some in senior management
Does two or more of the following	47	33	42	42	55	68
Staff trained in race equality	44	25	47	53	53	61
Provides a prayer space	40	30	32	37	49	56
Board level champion for equality and diversity issues	31	24	25	26	38	40
Internal steering group on equality and diversity	25	16	21	23	33	34
There is a budget to support equality and diversity	20	13	19	15	26	27
Personal diversity targets set for all managers	22	21	22	2	24	26

Source: Ethnic Minority Women at Work survey.

West Bromwich Building Society

Around 20 percent of new recruits over the past three years have been ethnic minority women. Good relationships with ethnic minority radio stations are helping to reach women in local communities and tell them about job opportunities.

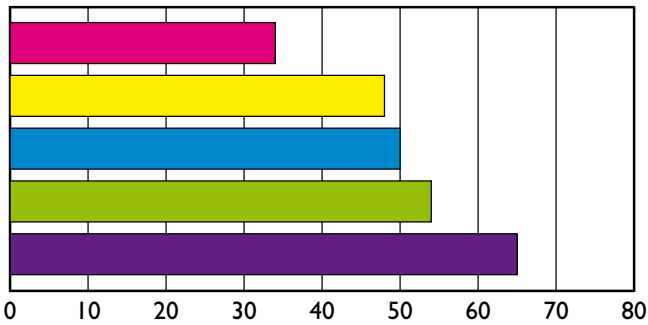
During a recent phone-in on Birmingham Asian station Radio XL, diversity officer Bina Desai took calls for an hour on job vacancies – all but two were from women. Bina used some Gujarati and her mortgage adviser colleague spoke in Punjabi, to reach as wide an audience as possible. They talked about what the organisation was doing in terms of diversity, both for employees and for customers, and they gave listeners examples of the kinds of jobs available.

5.3 Widespread applicability of approaches

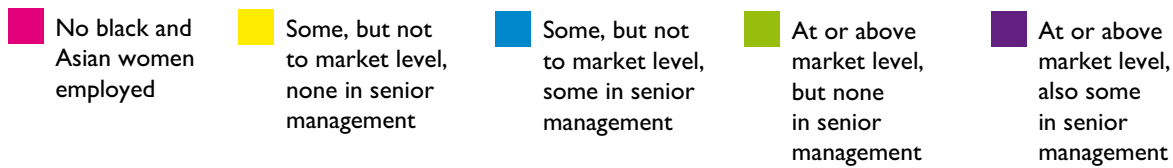
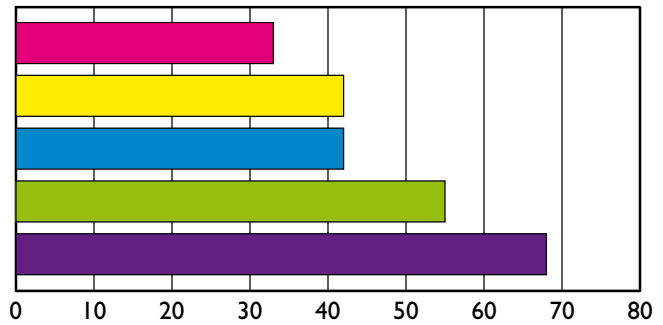
We boosted the sample of 800 employers to a total of more than a thousand so that we could compare employers in the same sectors. Within each sector it is apparent in Table 22 that there is an association of targeted actions and equality approaches with successful outcomes, with the exception of manufacturing. This is also the sector with a much lower proportion of employers employing black and Asian women at the level of the market or above.

Chart 7 Actions that might encourage black and Asian women

Percentage of employers taking one or more actions targeted specifically at black and Asian women (Table 20)



Percentage of employers taking at least two actions to demonstrate general commitment to equality (Table 21)

**Table 22 Comparisons between sectors**

%	Business Services		Education		Health, social work and personal services		Hotels and restaurants		Manufacturing		Wholesale and retail	
	U	O	U	O	U	O	U	O	U	O	U	O
Market level												
Taken one or more of the actions targeted specifically at black/Asian women listed in Table 20	40	53	57	77	64	72	43	47	26	27	36	54
The organisation has some emphasis on equality in general by doing two or more activities listed in Table 21	29	49	57	80	53	72	43	50	37	27	40	61
Sample size	58	98	44	113	47	143	40	118	73	64	55	112

Notes: U = Employs black/Asian women below market level; O = Employs black/Asian women at or above market level.

Source: Ethnic Minority Women at Work survey.

5.4 Private sector less likely to be proactive than public sector

Table 23 shows that the private sector is less likely to be proactive:

Table 23 Comparison between public and private sector employers

% of organisations in each sector	Public Sector	Private Sector
Take steps to increase applications from ethnic minority women	31	11
Have a board level equality champion	50	24
Success in employing black/Asian women in line with market	62	36

Source: Ethnic Minority Women at Work survey.

Action to help ethnic minority women move into senior management

Internal surveys at the London Borough of Hounslow showed that very few female ethnic minority middle managers progressed to more senior positions, so they developed a positive action programme for 16 ethnic minority women. Most of the participants put themselves forward but senior management were also asked to identify suitable candidates. The scheme involved leadership training as well as development opportunities such as shadowing, secondments, job swaps and work-based projects.

Feedback from the participants show it increased their confidence and belief in their own skills and abilities; deepened their understanding of the organisation and their role within it; increased the networking, support and partnership working available to them; and gave them the confidence to apply for more senior positions.

Of the 16 middle managers who started the 2003–04 programme, one gained promotion with another authority and has since become a self-employed consultant; four achieved substantive promotion to more senior posts within the organisation; and one was seconded to a post five grades higher. Only five remained at the same grade.

5.5 Employers recognise a need to be proactive

This general association of certain employer practices with positive outcomes in terms of the proportions of black and Asian women employed and progressing to senior level requires further research. Precisely what sorts of workplace cultures and particular targeted and equality practices will best deliver in different circumstances? Table 24 shows that there is some recognition on the part of employers that they need further knowledge about how to improve things, particularly among those not yet employing proportionately to the local market. We have commissioned further research looking in detail at cultures and practices within the workplace for the next phase of the investigation.

Table 24 Employer views on taking action to increase recruitment of black and Asian women

% of each category of employer	All	No black and Asian women employed	Some, but not to market level, none in senior management	Some, but not to market level, some in senior management*	At or above market level, but none in senior management	At or above market level, also some in senior management
Agree that my establishment could work harder to encourage black/Asian women to apply for jobs	35	32	38	28	38	31
Not sure how to improve the rate of applications from black/Asian women	28	35	37	36	22	12

Source: Ethnic Minority Women at Work survey.

* Small sample size

5.6 Conclusions

Many employers agree that they could work harder to encourage applications from black and Asian women, but many are not sure how to improve the rate of applications from these groups. It does seem, however, that a proactive approach is more common in those organisations that have succeeded in employing more black/Asian women and enabled them to be in senior management positions.

Over two-thirds of young Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women employees say that the presence of ethnic minority women in senior management is important to them in choosing a job and between a fifth and a quarter say it is very important. Enabling ethnic minority women to reach senior management is therefore likely to create a virtuous circle, encouraging more ethnic minority women to apply. There is a particularly strong association between those organisations providing leadership or management development schemes targeted at ethnic minority women with success in employing black or Asian women in senior management.

“There is a particularly strong association between those organisations providing leadership or management development schemes targeted at ethnic minority women with success in employing black or Asian women in senior management.”

6. Overcoming labour market barriers

In the context of Government strategies on ethnic minority and women's employment, and more generally on economic development and social cohesion, this section considers the importance of tackling labour market barriers that may be affecting ethnic minority women in particular ways.

6.1 A 'deficit model' may be increasingly less valuable for improving the labour market outcomes of young Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women

Given the capacities and the ambitions of young Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women, the current emphasis on a 'deficit model' that concentrates on building the capacity of these women may be less relevant than tackling the barriers to employment that are evident in data such as the unemployment rates. Capacity building, such as language classes, continues to be important for many first generation women, but for younger women it is likely that structural and discriminatory barriers in the workplace and the broader labour market need more attention. It will be important to consider which activities might be effective in this context. Targeted initiatives may be needed to promote a wider range of jobs and careers to ethnic minority women, as well as initiatives to challenge myths and stereotypes that appear to be holding back their progress at work. There may be ways in which public policies designed to help more people get into work could be adapted to cater for the particular needs of women from different ethnic and faith backgrounds, including the tax credit system, childcare strategy, skills strategy and Jobcentre Plus, for example. In the previous two sections we have dealt with employer and workplace issues. Here, at this interim stage of the investigation, we raise two particular issues that have come to our attention in relation to the broader labour market. The first is the need for better market information and the second is the need to assess the effectiveness of policy and practice in the context of very different family formation patterns in some ethnic communities.

6.2 Better market information

Local labour market information

Some local labour markets seem to provide more access to employment for ethnic minority women and more opportunity for them to reach senior positions than others, even when the broad employment rates and qualification structures of the markets are similar. This needs more study than is possible within this investigation, to determine what factors lead to a labour market out-performing the national average in these respects, and whether any of them involve practices that could be replicated in areas with less positive outcomes. This information would then need to be disseminated widely to those that influence the structure of their local labour market.

Employers may also find it useful to have ready access to information about the local labour market – which shows the picture for women and men from different ethnic groups. Table 19 shows, in areas of above-average black or Asian populations, that 60 percent of those currently not employing any black or Asian women do not expect to do so over the next five years and 80 percent do not have any plans

to introduce initiatives to improve their recruitment or progression of black or Asian women. At the other end of the spectrum, over 40 percent of those employing black or Asian women in proportion to the local market or above expect to increase the proportion in their workforce further and over a third are planning to introduce initiatives to improve their recruitment or progression further. **Forty percent of those who are employing below the level of the market don't realise that they are and 80 percent of these therefore do not have any plans to introduce new initiatives to improve the recruitment or progression of black and Asian women.** In addition to those with an inaccurate understanding of the local labour market, one in ten employers realised they didn't know how their workforce profile of black and Asian women compared with the local population.

This points to a need for better information – about the composition of the workforce within an organisation as well as about the composition of the local labour market. The introduction of 'equality checks' recommended by the Women and Work Commission could provide a framework for obtaining better information about issues within an organisation.

We would be interested to hear views on the best mechanism for taking this forward. What sort of information would employers find useful, and in what format? Which agencies or organisations are best placed to provide it? Might Regional Development Agencies have a role? Investors in People are committed to including equality in recruitment and selection as when they review the standard next year, which could provide an opportunity for employers to obtain accreditation for good practice, as well as benchmarking themselves against other organisations. We would also welcome views on the idea of equality checks or other tools to help employers benchmark their organisation against others.

Information for the Skills Review (The Leitch Review)

Although ethnic minority girls are now doing well at GCSE level and younger ethnic minority women born in the UK are doing as well as white British women at levels above this, there may be a mismatch between the qualifications they obtain and the skills most in demand by employers. In order to meet some of the challenges set out in the interim report of the Leitch Review of Skills, it would be helpful to have more information on subject choices made by males and females from ethnic minority backgrounds. The Department for Education and Skills collects data on the results, rather than the choices, by subject, but does not publish information that tells us whether Black Caribbean, Pakistani or Bangladeshi young women are over-concentrated in certain subjects, as they are in the workplace. This merits further investigation.

For those outside the labour market, access to education and training at the point they need it is critical. Some ethnic minority women may wish to enter further education or training at a later age than 14–19 years.

We have identified promising initiatives by some employers who have made efforts to link up with community organisations and schools or colleges, promoting the range of job opportunities available and explaining to young people what skills and qualifications they would need. The Fair Cities pilot is formalising this approach in some local labour markets, so it will be interesting to see the outcomes of these pilots in terms of helping ethnic minority women to find work.

Information to inform the choices of young women in education

In our survey of 16 year olds, between a third and a half of all the ethnic minority boys and girls we interviewed had not had careers advice that met their needs or stretched them in terms of helping them to consider a wide range of jobs or ones that would fulfil their potential (top section of Table 25). Between 60 and 80 percent also lacked basic information about pay, promotion and flexible working that might affect their choices. Young women who are the first generation in their family

to go through the British education system may have less easy access to outside networks for finding out about jobs and careers, although several girls in our focus groups had done their own research on the internet.

There is no clear pattern to suggest that one group is in a particularly worse position than another in these respects, especially given the sample sizes involved. **More than half of Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi young women lack basic information about jobs and do not feel they are getting careers advice that opens them to a wide range of possibilities or helps them consider jobs that will fulfil their potential.** This is particularly worrying in the context of the relatively high degree to which these groups are ruling out jobs because of their ethnicity, religion or sex (bottom section of Table 25 and see Table 16 for more detail).

We have also been told by some Muslim women who have been in touch with the EOC since we launched the investigation that they have been discouraged at school from going into higher education or professional careers.

A young Bangladeshi girl who wanted to become a doctor was told at school that girls from her community are likely to get married after 18 and hence she should not 'waste' her time in a degree but pursue a vocational qualification.

Table 25 Careers advice and knowledge about jobs limited

% of 16 year olds in each ethnic group	White British		Black Caribbean Girls (boys sample too small)	Pakistani		Bangladeshi	
	Boys	Girls		Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Careers advice							
'I have been able to get all the advice and information I need about jobs/careers from my school' – Disagree	28	28	47	25	23	26	31
'The job/career advice from my school makes me consider jobs that will fulfil my potential' – Disagree	26	28	29	36	25	23	24
'The job/career advice from my school has opened my eyes to a wide range of possible jobs and careers' – Disagree	33	32	44	30	27	25	30
<i>Any of above three – disagree</i>	47	46	59	50	40	32	47
'There is no opportunity to get hands on experience of the job I want' – Agree	30	18	26	31	24	32	21

What I know about the jobs I am likely to do:

'I know what the rates of pay are' – Disagree	47	57	36	36	48	30	52
'I know what opportunities there are for promotion' – Disagree	47	53	40	35	49	35	54
'I know whether the jobs I want to do offer flexible working (e.g. working at home, part-time, flexible start/finish times)' – Disagree	49	37	40	36	37	43	54
<i>Any of above three - disagree</i>	<i>72</i>	<i>74</i>	<i>59</i>	<i>60</i>	<i>72</i>	<i>65</i>	<i>79</i>
'I know the qualifications I need' – Disagree	9	13	8	14	12	12	15
'I know the skills I need to have' – Disagree	10	6	10	11	10	8	18
Ruling out jobs							
'I feel there are certain jobs I can't apply for because of my ethnic background or religious faith'	22	11	44	61	57	51	55
'I feel there are certain jobs I can't apply for because I am a male/female or because of my ethnic background/religious faith'	36	33	55	70	65	53	65

Source: Ahead of the Game: changing aspirations of young ethnic minority women.

Information to challenge stereotypes

Throughout this report we have shown evidence that challenges some of the commonly held stereotypes about Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women. For example, **the generation that is now 16 and will be entering the labour market over the next few years shares the same aspirations as white women to combine work and family.** Bangladeshi and Pakistani girls do not feel there is parental pressure to have a family rather than a career – indeed many talk about strong support and encouragement from their parents to pursue an education and to have a successful career. There is a need to disseminate this evidence more widely, as it could do much to prevent decisions being made based on out-dated or false assumptions.

As well as the damage caused by out-dated stereotypes and generalisations about ethnic minority women, barriers are also created through assumptions women are making about particular jobs and particular employers. It is therefore vital that opportunities are put in place for dialogue between young ethnic minority women and their prospective employers.

Taking steps to change perceptions about working for the police

Some organisations have taken it upon themselves to find out ethnic minority women's perceptions of them as a potential employer. Lancashire constabulary, for example, visited a number of local Muslim girls schools and organised women-only consultation evenings, with the help of women development workers from the voluntary sector. It became clear that many ethnic minority women ruled out a career in the police because they assumed it would compromise their religious identity and cultural values, and were worried about racism or bullying. The consultation events were an opportunity to share information about the flexible dress code, equal opportunities and anti-harassment policies, and support groups for ethnic minority and female staff. Feedback from these events has been excellent, and within three months, the service saw a 15 fold increase in the number of enquiries from ethnic minority women, many of whom now list the organisation as first choice for work experience opportunities. Lancashire Constabulary's work received a national award in 2005. For details see RaceActionNet Awards at www.raceactionnet.co.uk

6.3 Family patterns

The family patterns of Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women differ from the picture taken from national averages, which reflect patterns more common amongst white British women.

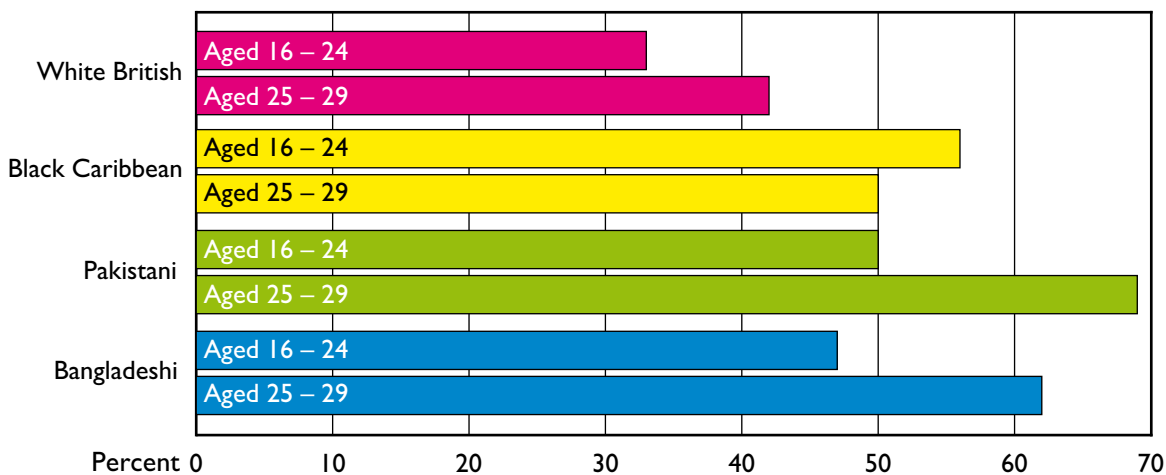
There is a need to 'equality proof' policies and public services that aim to help people into work to make sure these are working as effectively for Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women as they do for women generally or for ethnic minority men.

We previously noted the higher proportion of Black Caribbean women employees who are single parents – over a third, compared to about one in ten of white British, Pakistani or Bangladeshi women (Table 5). Over two-thirds of Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women employees are parents, compared to a half of white British women (Table 5). The availability of culturally sensitive, appropriate and affordable childcare will obviously be critical, particularly in areas where large proportions of the working population are from these groups. Public transport may also be an issue, to enable women with small children to combine work with their childcare arrangements as well as to provide a safe and affordable means of getting to and from their place of work. The availability of flexible working is likely to have particular importance as well, in terms of whether or not it is feasible for women who are single parents, and those with small children or caring responsibilities for other family members, to take up job opportunities.

Table 26 Higher proportions of under-30 Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women have dependent children in the household

% of women in each age group with dependent children	White British	Black Caribbean	Pakistani	Bangladeshi
Aged 16–24	33	56	50	47
Aged 25–29	42	50	69	62

Source: 2001 Census SARs, Crown Copyright 2004. This is based on the SARs provided through the Centre for Census and Survey Research of the University of Manchester, with the support of ESRC and JISC.

Chart 8 Proportion of women who have dependent children in the household

It is important to note that, on average, Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women have children at a younger age than white British women (Table 26) and that Pakistani and Bangladeshi women tend to have larger families (Table 27). This raises a number of questions. Are local services geared up to communities with larger families? Does the tax credit system serve those with larger families as well as it does other groups, or are some women still facing a disincentive to work because of the prohibitive cost of putting three or more children into childcare? Does education and training policy cater for the needs of women who may be entering the workplace for the first time in their 20s or 30s, once their children reach school age? Explanations for the high proportion of Pakistani and Bangladeshi women currently outside the labour market may be partly due to shortfalls in support services and training opportunities available to them at the point they need them.

Table 27 Larger households within Pakistani and Bangladeshi community

	White British	Black Caribbean	Pakistani	Bangladeshi
Average household size	2.3	2.3	4.2	4.7

Source: 2001 Census commissioned tables, crown copyright 2004.

“Capacity building, such as language classes, continues to be important for many first generation women, but for younger women it is likely that structural and discriminatory barriers in the workplace and the broader labour market need more attention.”

7. Conclusion

Britain's Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black Caribbean women are changing and present a major economic and social opportunity. Britain needs to change too if their potential is to be realised and their aspirations are not to be dashed.

There are some positive signs. But high unemployment, lower pay, poor prospects and the concentration of ethnic minority women in a narrow range of jobs and sectors will not disappear by themselves. Families and communities will continue to face economic disadvantage, employers will miss out on these women's talents and our workplaces will continue to be segregated on race, faith and gender lines, putting at risk efforts to build social cohesion.

The findings of our investigation so far suggest that looking at 'cultural factors' is not enough and may even be misleading for many younger women. Cultural factors locate the problem entirely with the women themselves or with their communities. Employment initiatives targeting ethnic minority women have tended to focus on the provision of better education and training to address skills gaps. Such initiatives may benefit older generations of women – those needing help with English as a second language and those with low qualifications – and those who remain outside the labour market but are looking to find work for the first time. However, there is also a need to review policies and practices that may indirectly put women from certain groups at a disadvantage. This is particularly urgent for younger generations of women of Pakistani and Bangladeshi heritage and for Black Caribbean women who have high aspirations but face real barriers to meeting them.

We think that three specific areas need to be explored further and would welcome views on them.

1. Avoiding generalisations about ethnic minority women in general and about Muslim women in particular, in policy making and in employment practices.

We need to understand more about the circumstances facing women from specific groups, to unpick the complex interplay, not just between race and gender, but between these and other factors such as faith, geography, age, educational qualifications and becoming a mother.

Furthermore, **if progress could be made on reducing segregation and improving their pay prospects, it could help the Government achieve key targets to close the gender pay gap, reduce child poverty, close the ethnic minority employment gap and reduce differences in unemployment between regions.** For example, the gap between ethnic minority employment and the overall rate is currently 15%, yet there are a quarter of a million ethnic minority women in Britain of working age who are not currently in work but would like to have a job (Labour Force Survey 2005). If these women were able to get a job, 50% of the Government's target to close the ethnic minority employment gap would be achieved.

'Equality proofing' of existing programmes and policies intended to improve employment outcomes for ethnic minorities, reduce unemployment between regions and to close the pay gap for women would help ensure that these initiatives are equally useful to Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi. Given that more than 90% of Pakistani and Bangladeshi women are Muslim, it could also ensure that these initiatives are used to improve Muslim women's employment opportunities. We would like the evidence presented in this report used to ensure that the Women and Work Commission Action Plan, the National Childcare Strategy, and the forthcoming Skills Strategy be used as levers to improve

the labour market outcomes for ethnic minority women. Policy initiatives emerging from the Ethnic Minority Employment Task Force could also have a profound impact on ethnic minority women's employment – including the new Cities Strategy, Business Commission, action on procurement and the opportunity of the 2012 Olympics – but only if they have an explicit gender focus. **The new Commission on Integration and Cohesion could usefully look at the different issues and opportunities presented by women as well as men** and consider the importance of realising economic opportunity for women to creating strong communities.

2. Understanding better what is working and why amongst employers and promoting best practice.

We have commissioned further research looking in more depth at the factors which improve recruitment, retention and progression rates of black and Asian women, as well as those factors which are holding back their participation and progress. **Our findings to date suggest that employers may need to review their policies and practices to ensure these support the involvement and inclusion of black and Asian women.** Those seeking to increase levels of diversity in their workforce need to think about how their organisation is perceived by those they seek to attract. There may also be a need to review cultural attitudes and beliefs within the existing workforce that could lead to discrimination. Such discrimination may be indirect and unintentional, but still puts women from minority groups at a disadvantage when it comes to recruitment and promotion.

The first step for an individual employer is to be aware of how far they are taking advantage of the opportunity ethnic minority women present. Giving employers easy access to local labour market information could help them judge whether or not they are employing a representative group and benchmark themselves against other employers in the area. Over 40% of those employers in areas with an above-average economically active black and Asian population who do not employ a representative proportion of these groups are unaware that they are employing below the market level. Over 80% of these have no plans to introduce new initiatives to improve their recruitment. Regional Development Agencies might play a useful role here, for example.

Diagnosis, to research and identify the issues within their organisation, is likely to be valuable, so they know more clearly what it is they need to do. We welcome views on how employers could best be encouraged and supported in undertaking this kind of diagnosis, perhaps taking forward the equality check suggested by the Women and Work Commission. If employers do not meet the 'gold standard' of the best employers, a 'toolkit' approach might be valuable, with examples of strategies proven to work in a comparable setting.

As well as action by individual employers, **interventions in schools and colleges to build links between employers and young women making decisions about further study or careers could improve understanding on both sides and open up opportunities for ethnic minority women to work in a wider range of jobs and sectors.** Our research of 16 year olds shows that at this age half of Black Caribbean girls and two-thirds of Pakistani and Bangladeshi girls feel there are 'certain jobs I can't apply for because I am a female, because of my ethnic background or religious faith' with some evidence that this may be linked to fear of discrimination based on assumptions rather than direct knowledge of specific employers. This compares with a third of white British girls. Initiatives to break down assumptions that certain jobs are only for men, only for women, or only for white British people, by improving careers advice and opening up work experience, for example, could be very helpful.

Further examination of why there are such different employment rates for ethnic minority women in different parts of the county would also be useful because it suggests scope for local interventions and regional policies to make a difference.

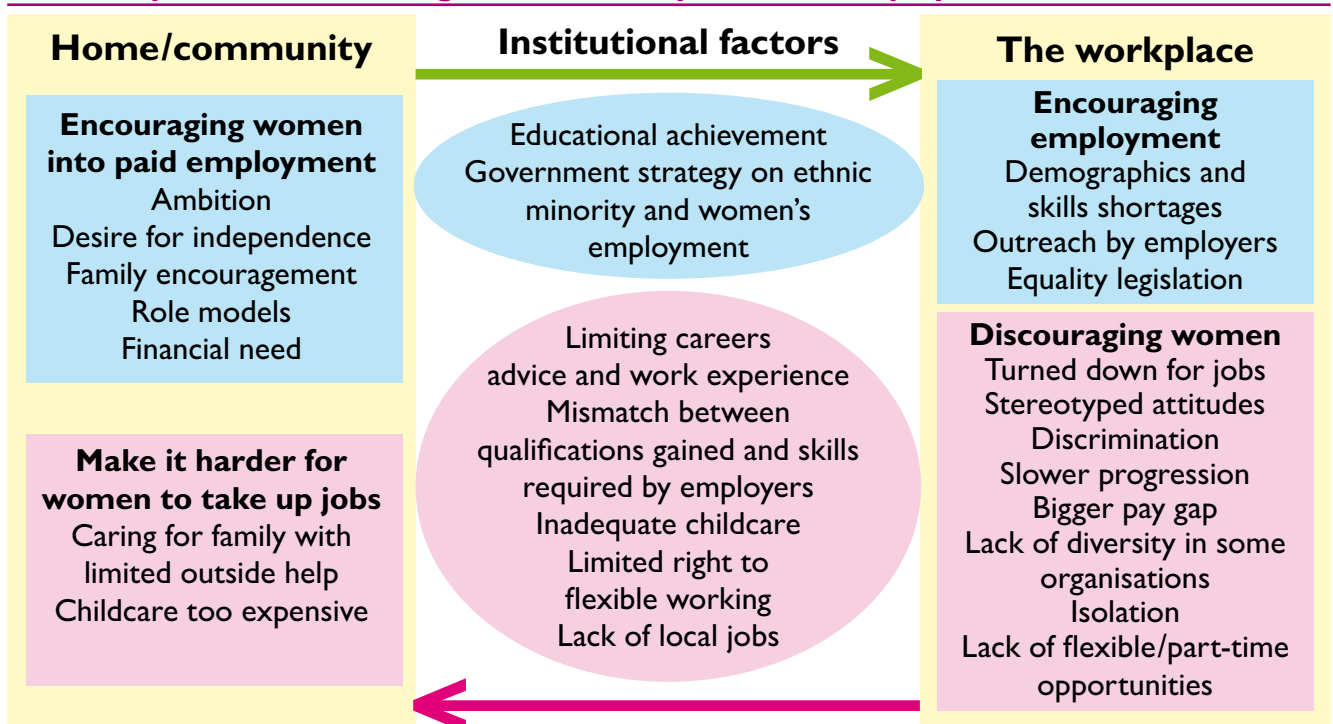
3. Removing the institutional barriers facing ethnic minority women who want to find paid work.

Our evidence already suggests that public policy interventions, particularly at key 'trigger points' such as leaving school and having children, could make a difference. These trigger points need to be better understood, ideally through further research. But data from the EOC investigation could be used to assess the impact of public services on women from different ethnic and faith groups. Public transport, work incentives and tax credits, advice to job seekers, education, training and childcare are all critical areas. **We need to ensure the considerable investment of public funds into economic development and regeneration is filtering down to Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black Caribbean women and their families, who are over concentrated in the most economically disadvantaged parts of the country.**

Britain's Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black Caribbean women are changing and Britain needs to change too if their potential is to be realised. Despite some positive signs, high unemployment, lower pay, poor prospects and the concentration of ethnic minority women in a narrow range of jobs and sectors will not disappear by themselves. Although training and support schemes to help ethnic minority women find work are important, particularly for those outside the labour market, it is also necessary to tackle policies and practices that directly or indirectly make it harder for Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black Caribbean women to get jobs at all levels and in all sectors of our economy. Without action to remove structural barriers and reduce the discriminatory effects of generalisations, stereotyped beliefs and attitudes about ethnic minority women and about Muslim women, the growing opportunity offered by younger women in particular will be lost to the labour market of the future. Families and communities will continue to face economic disadvantage, employers will miss out and our workplaces will continue to be segregated on race, faith and gender lines, putting at risk efforts to build social cohesion.

The chart illustrates the range of factors affecting ethnic minority women's job prospects, and the relationship between these. We particularly welcome suggestions for reducing the impact of factors which are pushing women out of the labour market, making it harder for them to find jobs in the first place and making it harder for them to progress to senior roles.

Push and pull factors affecting ethnic minority women's employment



Your views

This report is only one part of our ongoing investigation about ethnic minority women and their experiences in the workplace. We have commissioned further research on choices made by graduates, and on factors within workplace culture which affect ethnic minority women's progress.

We will publish our final report and recommendations in 2007, so giving us your views now is a real opportunity to influence future policy.

Take this as your opportunity to tell us what you think – we are keen to come up with workable solutions, that will make a real difference to ethnic minority women's ability to participate in the workplace, achieve their ambitions and realise their goals. All of which will go a good way towards helping the Government achieve its goals and for Britain to stay competitive in the global economy.

For those who prefer to email their comments and suggestions, email us at bme@eoc.org.uk. If you don't have access to the internet, we'll also take comments by post to Moving on up? investigation, EOC, Arndale House, Arndale Centre, Manchester M4 3EQ. The deadline for responses is 31 October 2006.

We are continuing to collect case studies from women and from employers, so please use the forms online at www.eoc.org.uk/bme to share your experience, or contact us for printed copies. 'Tell us your story' forms are available in Urdu and Bengali as well as in English.

Finally, don't keep this to yourself – help us spread the word about this important research: feel free to use extracts in your own newsletters, mailings, websites or events – provided you acknowledge the EOC as the source. We'd be grateful for copies of anything you produce, for our files. We can supply further material on request, including case studies.

For further information, go online to www.eoc.org.uk/bme and email us to be added to the mailing list.

“*Britain's Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black Caribbean women are changing and present a major economic and social opportunity. Britain needs to change too if their potential is to be realised and their aspirations are not to be dashed.*”

Appendices

Appendix I

Participation, pay and progression of ethnic minority women in Britain's workplaces.

Moving on up? – an EOC investigation.

Terms of reference

The investigation will focus particularly on the experiences of Pakistani and Bangladeshi women who wish to work outside the home. Women from these groups, many of whom are Muslims, are three times less likely to be employed than white women. We will also investigate the experiences of Black Caribbean women, who despite very high economic activity rates, are under-represented at senior and professional levels in the labour market. We will use the experiences of Indian and white women as comparisons. We will aim to give ethnic minority women more of a voice in the development of labour market policy and employment practice.

Research in Scotland and Wales will take account of local demographics and patterns of ethnic minority women's employment within those countries. Objectives of the investigation are:

1. To improve understanding of the current labour market position of women in the groups identified above, and of the career aspirations and experiences of women from different generations within these groups.
2. To identify specific factors affecting participation and progression in the labour market for women from the different ethnic backgrounds specified above.
3. Subject to DWP funding, to quantify the extent to which women from specific ethnic backgrounds are working below their potential .
4. To identify measures to help ethnic minority women with family responsibilities to gain the best employment possible, for those who wish to do so.
5. To identify practices by employers that are helpful to ethnic minority women's participation and progress at work, as well as practices which may unintentionally discriminate against women from specific ethnic minority backgrounds.
6. To identify ways in which government, business, the public sector, trade unions and voluntary organisations could take action to increase and improve employment opportunities for ethnic minority women.
7. To recommend policy solutions to inform the Government's Ethnic Minority Employment Task Force. There may be specific policy recommendations reflecting devolved governmental responsibilities in Scotland.

Appendix 2

Advisory Board members

CHAIR : Evelyn Asante-Mensah

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Appendix 3

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 Chair

BT: Robin Pauley, President European Affairs

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Cabinet Office: Equalities Review Team

City Circle: Asim Siddiqui

Connect Research and Consultancy Ltd

Commission for Racial Equality

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Department for Trade and Industry: Employment
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Department for Work and Pensions: Ethnic
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Department for Work and Pensions: National
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 General Manager

**The EOC would also like to thank the
 women who have taken time to share their
 experiences with us. If you would like to
 tell us your story please visit:**

www.eoc.org.uk/bme

or email bme@eoc.org.uk

Appendix 4

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