

# People from minority ethnic backgrounds living in rural areas

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## ***Research findings:***

- One in 20 people from a minority ethnic background in the UK lives in a rural area.
- There are usually economic reasons for their decision to live in the area they have chosen
- There is huge diversity in the socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds of minority ethnic people living in these areas – this makes them less visible than people living in larger communities.
- People are more likely to experience a racist attack in rural areas than in other parts of the country. They often do not report these attacks for fear of making things worse for themselves.
- People are usually dispersed and not organised. However they may try to organise themselves to help meet their religious needs (eg setting up places of worship, buying food that meets their dietary needs). They may also organise activities for children because they are worried that children could lose their cultural and religious heritage.
- Service providers often do not accept that there is a need to have information or policies on people from these groups. This means they do not address their needs and they have little contact with them.
- For individuals and families, the needs for services are at least the same as for people living in bigger minority ethnic populations. Support needs may be even greater because of the problems highlighted above.
- People may try to deal with their own problems because they lack confidence in services or do not know about them.
- People may choose to work in the area but live elsewhere because of the lack of social and service support. This means that the numbers of people from minority ethnic backgrounds in an area may be greater than Census figures show.

***Some suggestions about what services can do to help:***

- Find out from Census 2001 figures the population of different minority ethnic groups is in your area. You can work out from this the expected number of people with learning disabilities using prevalence rates for the general population.
- Develop policies that raise awareness of the needs of minority ethnic communities and increase cultural competence' in staff. This is an important role for all service providers. Police forces in particular have a role to play in dealing with the higher levels of racism in these areas
- Focus on community development activities that support people to organise themselves. Help them form groups that play a role in developing policy and practice to meets their needs. Involve them in partnerships with service providers.
- Bring in expertise and develop formal relationships with staff in other areas. Nearby areas with bigger minority ethnic communities should have more experience of the kind of work needed and should have a more developed service infrastructure eg for interpreting services.
- Join with other rural areas to recruit staff who can work across local authority boundaries.

***Further Information and Resources***

<b>Reference</b>	<b>Description</b>
<a href="http://www.rrep.org.uk/rrep.htm">http://www.rrep.org.uk/rrep.htm</a>	The Rural Race Equality Project
<a href="http://www.lg-employers.gov.uk/diversity/race/bme/">http://www.lg-employers.gov.uk/diversity/race/bme/</a>	Site to assist councils to develop a comprehensive approach to addressing racial inequality in employment and service delivery.
<a href="http://www.ruraldiversity.net/">http://www.ruraldiversity.net/</a>	Rural Race Equality Site. Includes the CRE report by Jay (1992) "Keep them in Birmingham: Challenging Racism in South West England"
<a href="http://www.united.non-profit.nl/">http://www.united.non-profit.nl/</a>	UNITED for Intercultural Action European network against nationalism, racism, fascism and in support of migrants and refugees.
De Lima, P J F	"Needs not Numbers: an exploration of minority ethnic communities in Scotland" London, CRE, 2001