



Central Scotland  
Regional Equality Council

**A Strategy for Increasing Forth Valley's Minority  
Ethnic, National, and Cultural Communities'  
Employability**

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## **Abstract**

This document details the evolution of CSREC's research into Forth Valley's minority ethnic, national, and cultural communities' employability.

In the first section of *Part One*, we explore the statistical data that evidences the extent of the inequalities experienced by minority communities in relation to employment. We look at economic activity, occupation type, and educational attainment. The statistical evidence simply demonstrates that there are differences but it does not provide explanations. It provides therefore the cogent basis for examining some of the barriers proffered as explanations in the literature reviewed. *Part One* of the document provides the context for the strategy to employability support detailed in *Part Two*.

The second section of *Part One* examines the barriers to and within employment that the literature we consulted highlighted. The objective was to determine whether or not people in Forth Valley are affected by those barriers, and whether there are local issues which further compound people's work opportunities. What is contained within this section are the barriers and local issues we found to be inhibiting people from minority communities locally.

*Part Two* outlines the strategy and approach to employability support that we believe is most effective within the context of Forth Valley. In line with the literature reviewed, and the opinions of local people and partner organisations, we recommend an approach that is **appealing, accessible, meaningful** and **holistic**. The section explores what is meant by those criteria, detailing the considerations and interventions that employability support must realise to be effective for minority ethnic, national and cultural communities in Forth Valley.

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## Introduction

Central Scotland Regional Equality Council was approached by the Stirling Multicultural Partnership to raise the issue of Forth Valley's minority ethnic, national and cultural communities and employment. It was felt that there were divergences both in terms of the rates of unemployment and economic activity between minority communities and the white native community. As a result, CSREC undertook a research project to explore those claims and examine more closely the local situation.

Our research into the issue has demonstrated that the problems people face are as diverse as the people and communities that compose the area's population. We have spoken to people who have achieved great feats and who are very content with their situations, and conversely we have spoken to people who have experienced great hardship and difficulty. These stories are not unique to minority communities: they reflect a reality that all people encounter.

However, the extent to which people from minority communities encounter such experiences is disproportionate to the wider, general population. All minority ethnic communities experience a heavier burden of unemployment and economic inactivity than do White communities. However, no two communities experience the same issues, nor even do two groups within one community in different geographical areas. There is no one single barrier and no *one-size-fits-all* solution.

Minority communities represented more than a third of the total population growth across Forth Valley over the decade between the 2001 and 2011 censuses, doubling the number of people identifying as being from a minority background in the Forth Valley's population. Minority communities are playing an increasingly more important role in the economic future of the area; as such, there is a need to act to ensure that local people from minority backgrounds share equal access to the area's employment opportunities. However, not only is there a need to act, the communities themselves are eager for support in overcoming the barriers that impede their ability to seize those employment opportunities.

What those barriers are is a far more nuanced question. There are barriers to and within employment that can be effected at a local level, and there are others that require broader societal change. The barriers we have focused on in this report are those that we believe are within the purview of localised, third-sector initiatives to effect change. For example, a third-sector employability project is not likely to have the resources to be able to re-house somebody whose housing situation is their principal barrier to employment. However, a third-sector employability project can support people to petition those who are able to act in that area.

Part One of this toolkit provides the context for our answer as to how to act. At its simplest, the answer is contingent upon a project being: **appealing**, **accessible**, **meaningful** and **holistic**. We explore each of these criteria individually to clarify what we mean and how they should be interpreted. We explore the support provisions

that would make a project holistic in its scope, exploring a four-pronged method of: **educating, raising aspirations, building networks and tackling discrimination.**

Part Two of this document in its entirety is our strategy for increasing Forth Valley's minority communities' employability. It details the provisions and considerations that will make an employability support initiative effective in bring about the change and help that local people in the area are appealing for, relating its success squarely on the development of effective partnership work between public and third-sector service providers in Forth Valley.

We set out a strategy that from its inception must be focused on the needs of the client, prioritising them above the process of support. This engenders a flexibility and adaptability that allows the project to respond to changes in the wider economy and society. It engenders an ethos that strives to keep the project's interventions relevant to and rooted in the existential problems faced by individual clients. Every client is different, their experiences are unique and so bespoke support is what is always needed. The range and scope of the strategy we put forward in Part Two optimises the ability of offering that bespoke support.

## Terminology

The document uses terminology which might not always be clear and/or may seem over-simplified. It is important to explain what is meant by certain terms to allow for easier reading and the avoidance of confusion.

Where the term *white native* is used, it refers to White Scottish, White Other British, White English, White Welsh, and White Irish. Those from other white communities are not described in this document as being from the *white native* community, even if they were born in the UK. For the purposes of this report those who identified as being from the White Irish community are considered *white native*.

The term *white minority* refers to anyone who described themselves as being from any white group other than the ones detailed above as being *white native*.

*White Indigenous* refers to anybody from the White communities who was born in the UK, irrespective of the community they identify with.

Where the term *minority communities/populations* is used, it means minority ethnic, national, and cultural communities. Throughout this toolkit, *minority communities* refers solely to race, ethnicity and nationality.

Where the term *minority ethnic* is used, it denotes all those from visible minority ethnic communities, born inside and outside the UK. That is to say, those who identified themselves as being from an African, Caribbean, Pakistani, Indian, Chinese, and Other backgrounds. This use is in line with the Scottish Government's report into Equality Outcomes Part 2<sup>1</sup>.

The term *minority indigenous* is used to describe anyone from a minority ethnic, national and cultural background who was born in the UK. That is to say, the children of first-generation immigrants, the children of those born outside the UK but who moved here to live, work and grow their families. Therefore, second, third fourth generations of immigrants are referred to as *minority indigenous*.

As with the Scottish Government's 'Analysis of the Equality Results in the 2011 Census – Part 2', this report shortens 'Asian, Asian Scottish, or Asian British' to 'Asian' throughout this paper, and the categories within have also been shortened e.g. 'Indian, Indian Scottish or Indian British' to 'Indian', making it easier to read and allowing for smaller labels. The same principle has been applied to all other categories.

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<sup>1</sup> The Scottish Government, *Analysis of the Equality Results from the 2011 Census – Part 2*, March 2015, < <http://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/analytical-reports-0>>

## Method

### **1. Analysis of the 2011 Census Data at Forth Valley Level**

The 2011 Census information was obtained from Scotland's Census 2011 website<sup>2</sup>. The following Standard Output tables were used for each of the three local council areas that comprise Forth Valley (Clackmannanshire, Falkirk, and Stirling):

- Table DC2101SC - *Ethnic group by sex by age*
- Table DC6201SC - *Economic activity by ethnic group by sex by age*
- Table DC5202SC - *Highest level of qualification by ethnic group by age*
- Table DC6213SC - *Occupation by ethnic group by sex by age*

The results of the individual tables were aggregated with their corresponding partners for the three council areas and thus the results for Forth Valley were obtained.

The recently published Equality Outcome reports from the Scottish Government were used to obtain trends and information for the overall national results for the 2011 Census.

Due to the changes in the ethnicity questions between 2001 and 2011 Censuses, it was not possible to directly compare the two and so we determined that only the overall population figures were necessary and these were obtained from the following report<sup>3</sup>.

The raw data we have collated can be found in *Appendix 3* at the end of this document. It contains additional information that is not explored fully in this document but which has informed our strategy development.

### **2. Literature Review**

A short review of key pieces of literature on the employability issues among minority ethnic, national and cultural communities. These were a mix of localised, Scotland-wide, UK-wide, and international reports. The literature provided some of the reasoning behind the census data, highlighting documented barriers to and within employment. Nonetheless, the literature consulted is not exhaustive as the subject of minority communities' employability is complex and the range of literature reflects that.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.researchonline.org.uk/sds/search/download.do;jsessionid=842E27C1F761C7B19F3939DD967FD12?ref=LMD18>

### 3. Discussions with Key Stakeholders

Through the course of this research project, interviews were conducted to provide further context of the local situation in Forth Valley and *test* some of the findings from the literature review and census analysis. These discussions have informed the design and development of our strategy explored in Part Two.

Interviews were held with relevant people from the following organisations:

- Citizens Advice Stirling
- Citizens Advice Alloa
- Citizens Advice Falkirk
- Falkirk Council ESOL Provision
- Stirling and Clackmannanshire Councils ESOL Provision
- Aspire Stirling
- Falkirk Council Community Development
- Stirling Council Multicultural Partnership
- Skills Development Scotland
- The Bridges Programmes
- WSREC
- Homestart Stirling
- Scottish Prison Service
- The Stirling School of English
- Forth Valley College
- The Scottish Mentoring Network
- New Futures Project (Salvation Army)
- Jobcentre Plus

Furthermore, correspondence was exchanged with the following:

- Falkirk Council
- Stirling Council
- Clackmannanshire Council
- NHS Forth Valley
- Police Scotland and Forth Valley Division
- CVS Falkirk
- Stirling Voluntary Enterprise
- Clackmannanshire Third Sector Interface
- Clackmannanshire Business Gateway
- Forth Valley Chamber of Commerce
- Ineos
- Stirling University
- The Ministry of Justice
- The Scottish Parliament
- Falkirk Islamic Centre
- Stirling Islamic Centre
- Central Scotland African Union (CeSAU)

- Russian-speakers in Falkirk
- Forth Valley Indian Women's Association
- Stirling Chinese Association
- Forth Valley Migrant Support Network
- Scottish Trade Union Congress (STUC)
- Black and Ethnic Minority Infrastructure in Scotland (BEMIS)

#### **4. Survey and Focus Groups**

A survey was also conducted which garnered responses from 161 individuals living in Forth Valley from minority ethnic, national and cultural backgrounds. The responses are included in Appendix 4 at the end of this document.

The respondents to the survey also participated in 28 focus groups which allowed for a fuller discussion of the issues and a more complete context for the answers provided. These respondents/participants were overwhelmingly engaged through EFL groups running in across Forth Valley.

Both the survey and the focus groups were conducted anonymously in order to encourage people to discuss their experiences more freely.

## **Part One**

### **The Need and the Barriers**

## Part One

### Section 1: Population Data

#### 1.1 Forth Valley Context

The Forth Valley region of Scotland is located at the heart of the country, comprising three local council areas: Clackmannanshire, Falkirk, and Stirling. 297,679 people were recorded as living in the region at the time of the 2011 Census for Scotland, which represents 5.6% of Scotland's total population.

In Scotland, 325,000 people identified themselves as being from a minority community; in Forth Valley, 13,261 individuals did so. Whereas Forth Valley represents 5.6% of Scotland's total population, it represents 4.1% of its minority population.

The overall proportion of Forth Valley's population identifying as being from a minority community in the 2011 census stands at 4.45%. However, the distribution of minorities across the Forth Valley is not even: Stirling has the highest proportion and number of minority individuals, 6.31% and 5,690 respectively; Falkirk has the lowest proportion but the second highest number, 3.62% and 5,651 respectively; and Clackmannanshire has the second highest proportion but the lowest number, 3.73% and 1,920 respectively.

Forth Valley encompasses both urban and rural areas; predominantly the population is concentrated in the main urban centres, however, a sizeable proportion live in rural communities, particularly in the Stirling Council area.

#### 1.2 Changes since the 2001 Census

The 2011 Census for Scotland confirmed that the Scottish population is growing increasingly more diverse<sup>4</sup>. In Scotland, the minority population is still mostly concentrated in the large urban centres: Glasgow has the highest number of residents describing themselves as being from a minority community; whereas, in terms of diversity, Edinburgh is the most ethnically diverse area of Scotland<sup>5</sup>. Nonetheless, the census shows that minority communities are increasing their representation in all areas of Scotland: all regions are more diverse now than in 2001<sup>6</sup>.

Across Scotland, minority communities grew by 29%<sup>7</sup> over the course of the decade between censuses. The growth rate in less traditional settlement areas for minority

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<sup>4</sup> Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 'How has ethnic diversity changed in Scotland', *Dynamics of Diversity: Evidence from the 2011 Census*. May 2014, <[http://www.ethnicity.ac.uk/medialibrary/briefings/dynamicsofdiversity/code-census-briefing-scotland\\_v2.pdf](http://www.ethnicity.ac.uk/medialibrary/briefings/dynamicsofdiversity/code-census-briefing-scotland_v2.pdf)>, pp. 1

<sup>5</sup> *ibid*, pp. 3

<sup>6</sup> *ibid*, pp. 2

<sup>7</sup> Joseph Rowntree Foundation, pp. 1

communities was greater<sup>8</sup>; this was true for Forth Valley, which saw its minority communities more than doubling, growing by 102%<sup>9</sup>.

In 2001, the minority populations in Forth Valley stood at 2.34%<sup>10</sup> of the overall population, by 2011 that had increased to 4.45%<sup>11</sup>. Within each of the three local council areas of Forth Valley, similar increases took place.

Between the two censuses, the white minority population in Forth Valley grew by 97%, but the minority ethnic community grew at a moderately higher rate of 109%. In contrast the white indigenous population grew by 4%. These growth rates have resulted in the white minority's share of the minority population falling from 51.9% in 2001 to 50.2%, and conversely the minority ethnic community has increased from 48.1% to 49.8% in the same period.

As a result of the high growth rates of the minority populations in Forth Valley, minority communities represented 36.83% of the total population growth in the Forth Valley over the period of the two censuses<sup>12</sup>. Minority communities are an increasingly significant part of Forth Valley, both in terms of its demographic and economic future.

Several explanations have been proffered for these changes, and high growth rates, including:

- The expansion of the European Union throughout the decade contributed significantly to the increase in population. In 2001, the EU stood at fifteen member states, by 2011 that had increased to twenty-seven. Consequently, the 'White Polish' community, as identified in the census, is now the largest individual minority community in Forth Valley, representing 16.26% of the BME community. Over 3,000 people living in Forth Valley were born in countries which ascended to EU membership after 2001, which represents 60% of EU nationals living in Forth Valley.
- The relatively young age of the minority population meant that "births outstripped deaths" leading to an increase in established communities, as families expanded<sup>13</sup>.
- The Joseph Rowntree report notes that university towns tend to be more ethnically diverse<sup>14</sup>. This is certainly true within Forth Valley, with the student population of Stirling University perhaps explaining the significantly larger proportion of minority communities found in Stirling's population.

From information gathered from the university, it is estimated that at the time of the 2011 census, as many as 2,497 people from minority backgrounds were

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<sup>8</sup> Joseph Rowntree Foundation, pp. 2

<sup>9</sup> *Forth Valley's Minority Communities and Employability*, Table 1.4, pp 2

<sup>10</sup> *ibid*

<sup>11</sup> *ibid*

<sup>12</sup> *Forth Valley's Minority Communities and Employability*, Table 1.5, pp 2

<sup>13</sup> Joseph Rowntree Foundation, pp. 3

<sup>14</sup> *ibid*

affiliated with the University of Stirling. If all of those individuals were living in Stirling at the time, that would represent 43.9% of Stirling's minority population.

### **1.3 2011 Census Results**

The 2011 Census for Scotland paints a panoramic, holistic picture of the population present in the area at the time of the last weekend in March 2011. Given the four years that have passed since then and the change in the economic conditions over that time, the census may seem a less accurate account of the population contemporaneous with this report; however, it is the most detailed vista available, and while the rates of unemployment may not be accurate, the differences between the communities are relevant.

For the purposes of this document, we examined specific census results:

1. the economic status of individuals living in Forth Valley
2. the highest level of education attained
3. the occupation type

Our exploration of these three areas highlights significant divergences between communities in Forth Valley, which this section details. Establishing these differences provides the cogent basis for going on to explore the possible reasons behind them and the means of supporting individuals to overcome barriers to and in employment.

### **1.4 Economic Status**

There are two categories of economic status: *economically active*, and *economically inactive*. The terms are not self-evident and can be counter-intuitive. Those described as *economically active* are those who constitute the supply of labour: anyone who is engaged in work or available to work. The unemployed are counted among the *economically active* as they are part of the labour supply, albeit unutilised.

For most, the concept of unemployment is simple: anybody who does not have a job. However, in terms of the labour force analysis, it is not that simple: the UK applies the International Labour Organisation's definition of unemployment which is "anybody who is without work, available to work and seeking work"<sup>15</sup>. These three criteria must be met in order to be classed as *unemployed*.

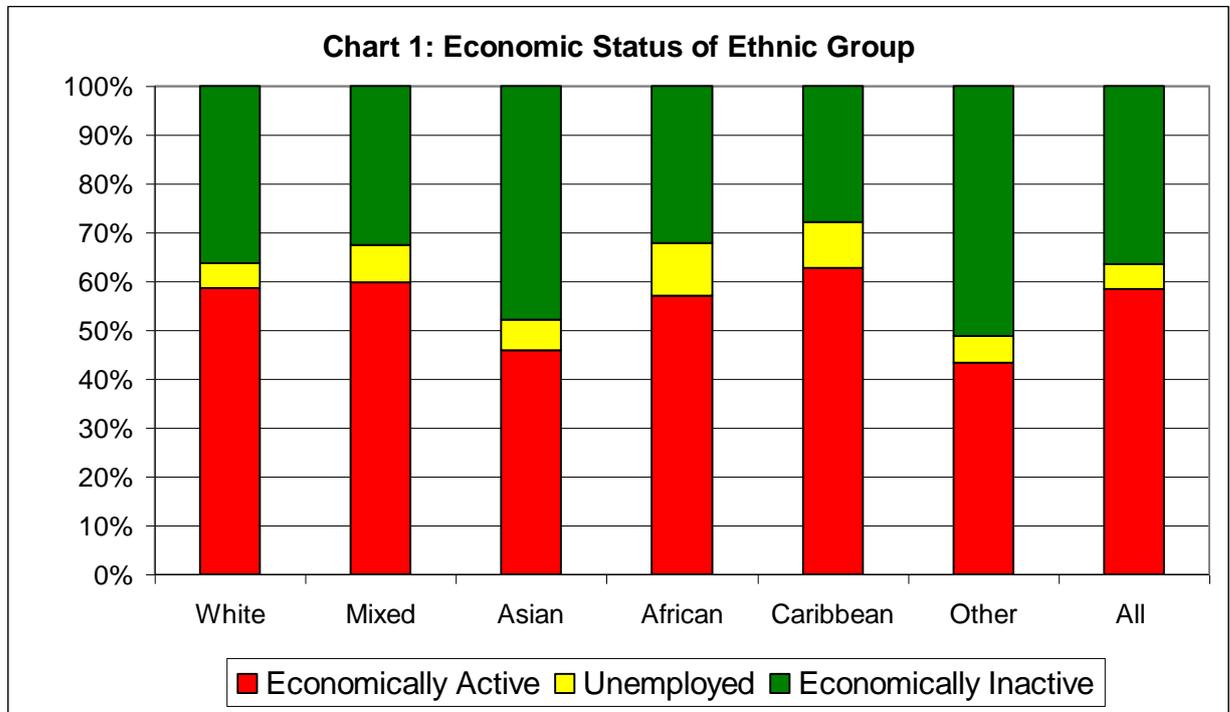
The *economically inactive* are defined as those who are neither unemployed nor in employment. The definition is effectively a negative one, in the sense that the *economically inactive* are defined by what they are not, as opposed to what they are. There are many reasons why an individual may be inactive, for example, they might

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<sup>15</sup>Office of National Statistics, *Unemployment and the Claimant Count*, <<http://www.ons.gov.uk/.../articles.../unemployment-and-the-claimant-count.pdf>> pp. 1

be studying, looking after family or long-term sick. These individuals are not part of the supply of labour but are important as they are potential labour supply in the future<sup>16</sup>.

The economic status of each community breaks down as follows:

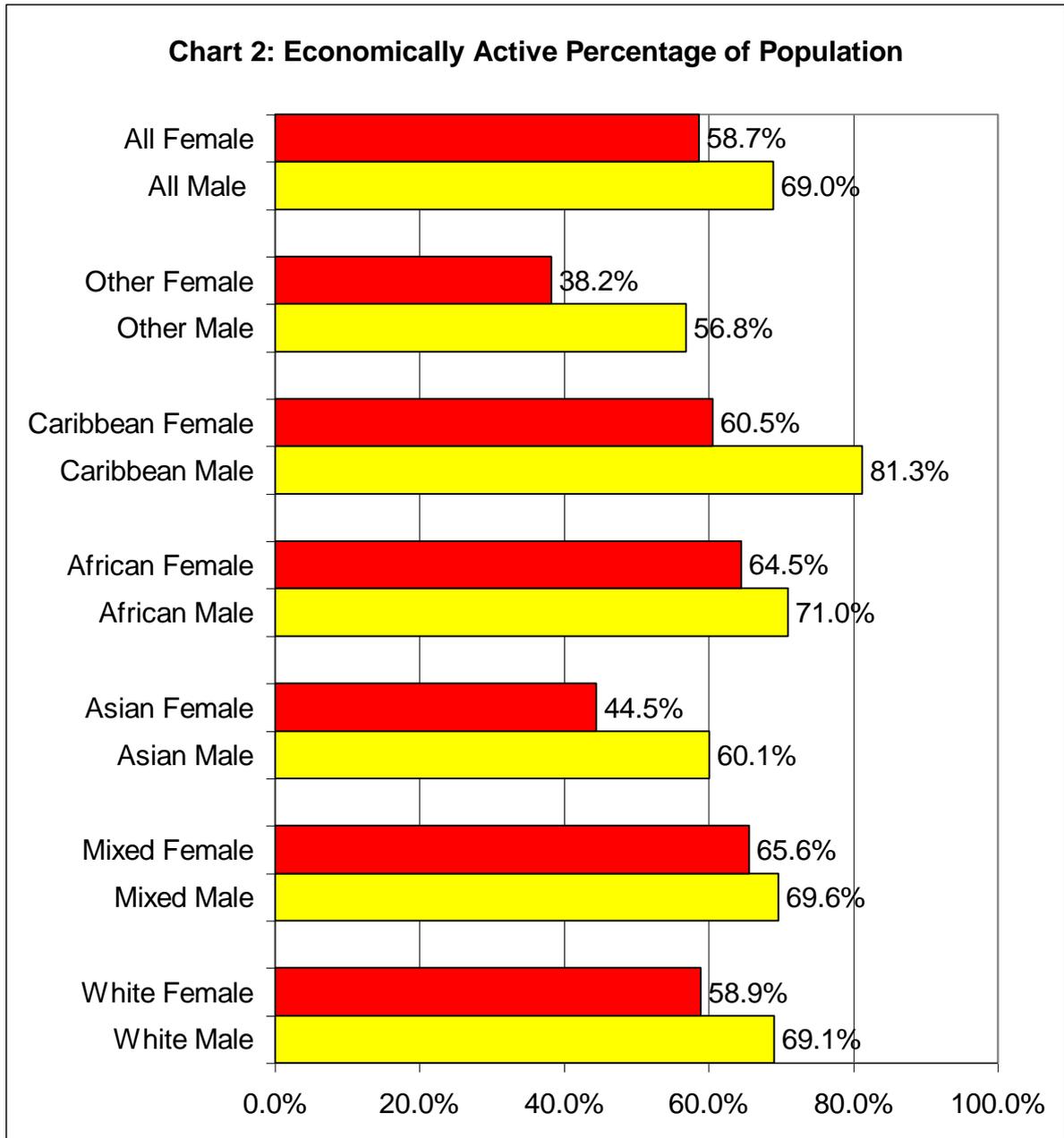


### 1.4.1 Economically Active (not unemployed)

As we stated previously, the census information was obtained from the 2011 Census for Scotland website. The website’s standard output tables for the information concerning the economic status of the population is not broken down to as specific a set of ethnic groupings as that of the population. For economic status, ethnic groupings are amalgamated into their broad umbrella categories, i.e. all communities are aggregated, so, for example, instead of being broken down to Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Chinese and Other, all Asian communities are counted as Asian.

While this does not allow for a truly accurate means of assessing which communities are most affected, we nonetheless are able to see wider trends within the communities. In order to obtain a more group-specific view of the differences, the report has relied on broader national trends as described in the Scottish Government’s Equality Results Analysis reports, which looks at the national average, not regional.

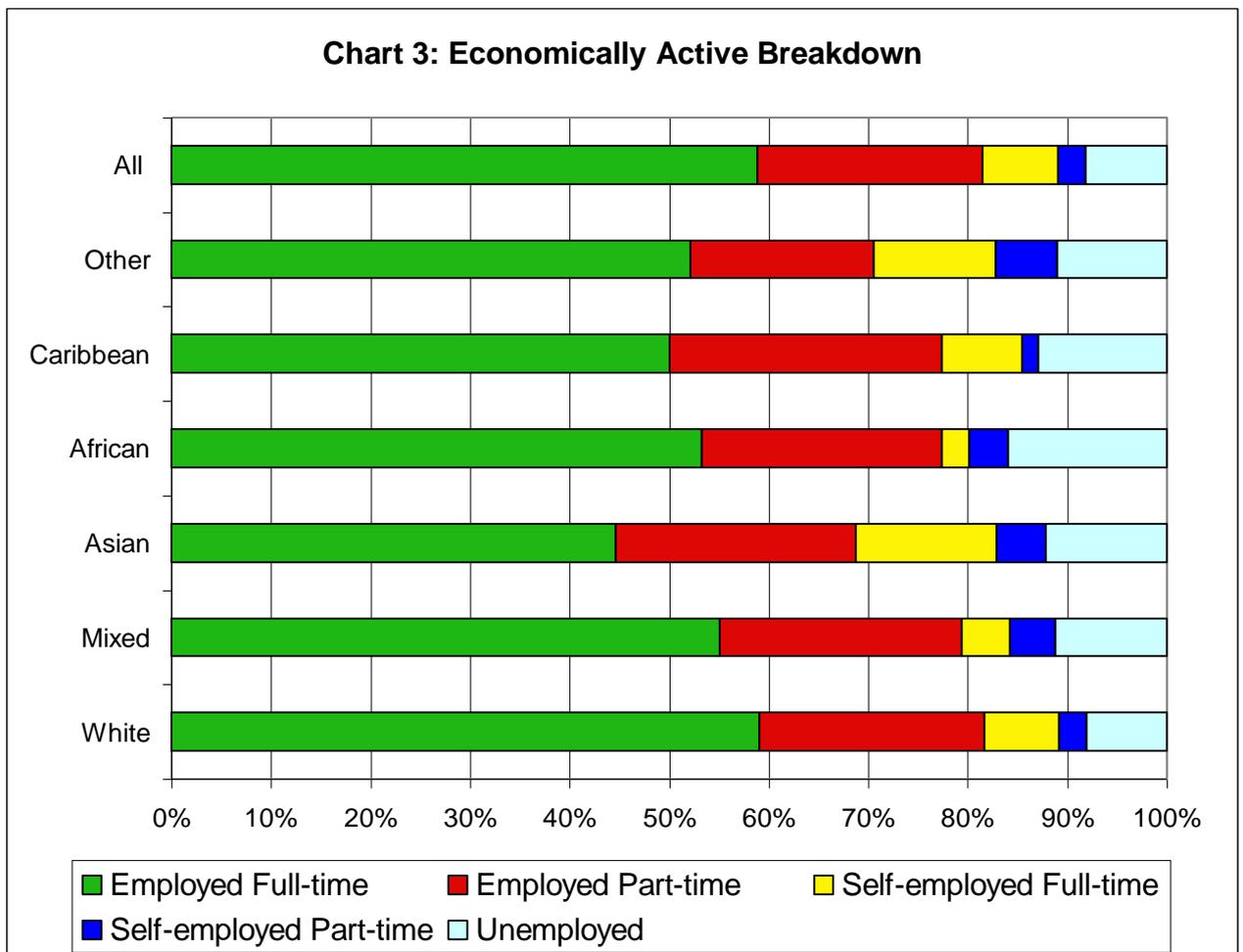
<sup>16</sup> National Audit Office, *Increasing Employment Rates for Ethnic Minorities*, <<http://www.raeng.org.uk/publications/other/increasing-employment-rates-for-ethnic-minorities>>, pp 3



In broad terms, men from all communities are the most likely to be *economically active* with 69% of the male population over sixteen falling into this category, as compared to 58.7% of the female population. More specifically, men from Caribbean communities are the most likely to be categorised as *economically active*; women from Other communities are the least likely: 81.3% and 38.2% respectively.

However, as previously stated, simply being *economically active* does not necessarily mean the individual is engaged in work. There are five sub-categories of *economically active*:

1. *employed full-time*
2. *employed part-time*
3. *self-employed full-time*
4. *self-employed part-time*
5. *unemployed* (which will be looked at in a later section of its own).



Further examination of these sub-categories allows for a more comprehensive picture of the *economically active* contingent of the various communities:

- The White communities are the most likely to be *employed full-time* at 59.1% of the *economically active* from that community; the Asian communities are the least likely at 44.7%.
- The Caribbean communities are the most likely to be employed part-time, with 27.4% falling into this category; the Other communities are the least likely, at 18.4%.
- The Asian communities are the most likely to be self-employed full time, at 14.1% describing themselves as such; the African communities are the least likely at 2.7%.
- The Other communities are the most likely to be self-employed part-time at 6.1%; the Caribbean communities are the least likely at 1.6%.

In its report on employability among minority ethnic communities, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) brings specific focus on the higher-than-average rates of self-employment and entrepreneurship among minority

communities. It describes it as possibly arising as a result of “necessity” rather than “opportunity”<sup>17</sup>.

Self-employment arising as a result of necessity is possibly a result of the barrier people from minority communities face when entering regular employment<sup>18</sup>, or as a result of entering into family businesses which tend to be concentrated in low-growth sectors. It is certainly the case that we have spoken to people living in Forth Valley who fall into both categories, suggesting that there are indeed people who are self-employed as a result of a lack of opportunities elsewhere. The majority of whom were women working as cleaners from Central and Eastern Europe.

Examining national trends highlights the need to disaggregate the various ethnic communities from their umbrella groupings because the levels of economic activity vary widely. The Scottish Government’s analysis of the equality results of the census demonstrates stark divergences between communities:

- The White Polish community for example has an *economically active* rate of 86% of its population over sixteen, with 56% of the total population being employed full-time. This is 16% higher than its nearest counterparts in the Indian and White Other communities at 40%.
- The findings also highlight the problem of aggregating all the Asian communities together: whereas the Indian community has the second highest rate of full-time employed; the Chinese and Pakistani communities are at the lower end of the table at 22% and 21% respectively.

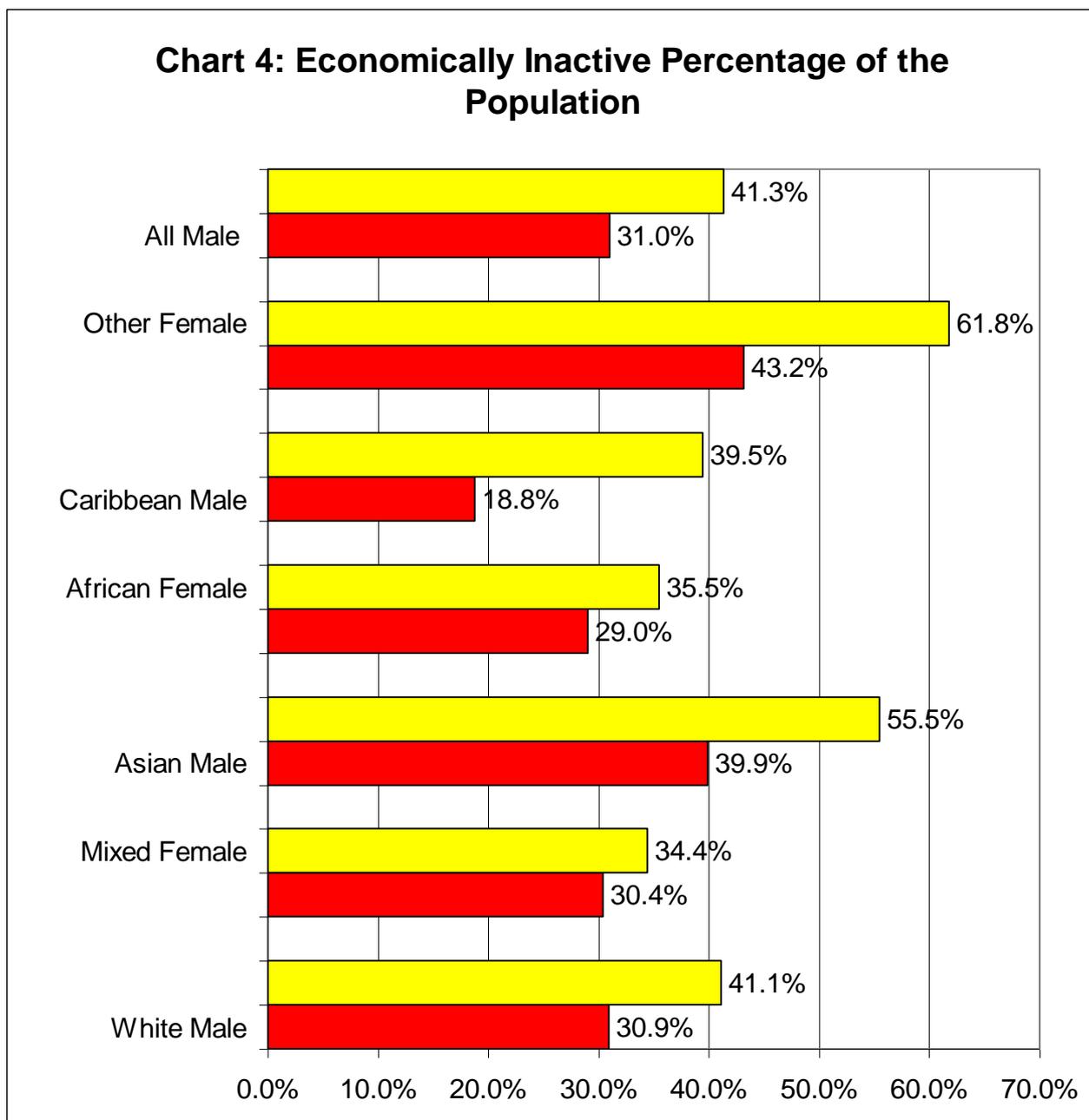
Unfortunately, however, there is no means of confirming these national trends within Forth Valley.

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<sup>17</sup> Francesca Froy and Lucy Pyne, ‘Ensuring Labour Market Success for Ethnic Minority and Immigrant Youth’, *OECD Local Economic and Employment Development (LEED) Working Papers 2011/09*, <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/5kg8g210547b-en>> pp. 37.

<sup>18</sup> *ibid*

### 1.4.2 Economically Inactive

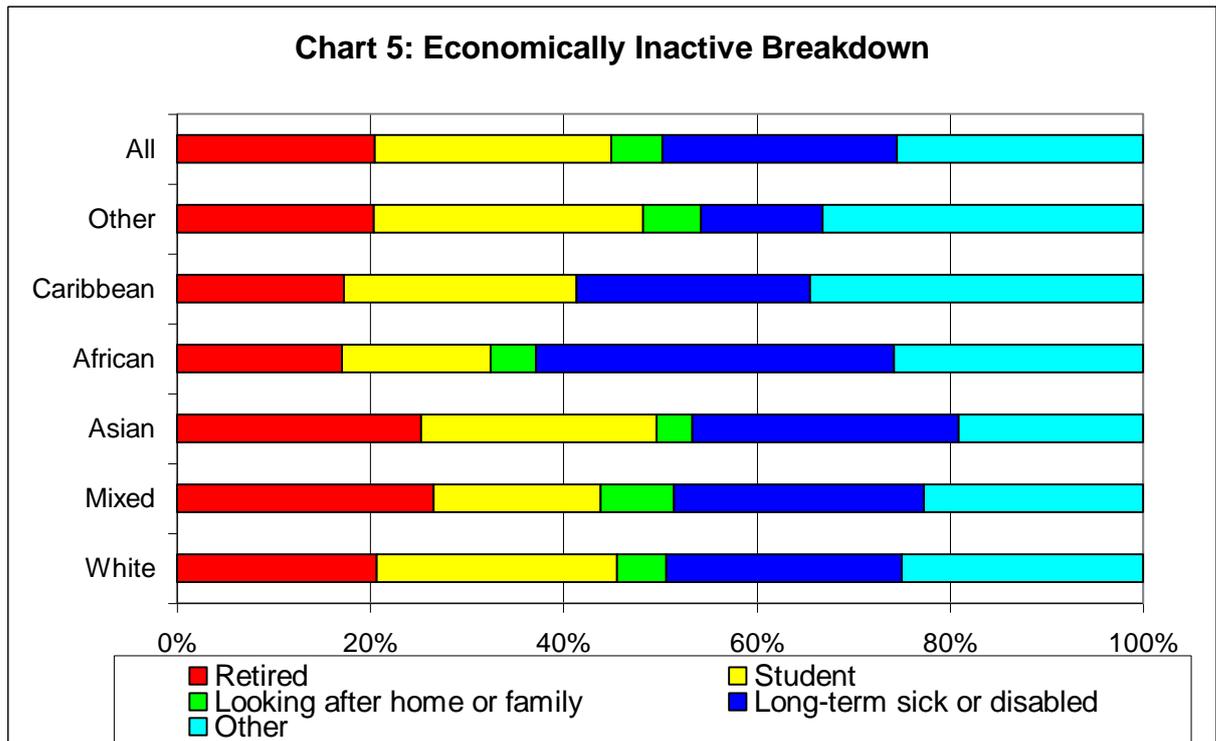


Generally, women are the most likely to be economically inactive with, on average, 59% of all the people self-identifying as *economically inactive* being female, to 41% male. Within the communities this ratio ranges from 52% female to 48% male in Other communities, to 63% female to 37% male in African communities.

The data for the economically inactive are given according to five categories:

1. *retired*
2. *student*
3. *looking after home or family*
4. *long-term sick*
5. *other*

The term inactive does not necessarily adequately define this group in that it does not necessarily recognise the contribution people who fall into this contingent bring, for example, students are in education to later bring their knowledge and skills to the labour market; stay-at-home parents facilitate their children's education and their partner's working, while at the same time reducing the pressure on the over-stretched childcare provisions. Notwithstanding, as stated earlier, it is important to look at this group as potential labour supply in the future and there is a need to put in place means of allowing people to transition into employment in the future.



There are stark divergences among the communities when examining these sub categories:

- The vast majority of the White population falls into the category of being *retired* (63.3%); the nearest group to that ratio is the Caribbean communities, of whose *economically inactive* population, 29.2% are retired.
- This difference is matched when examining those who are *students*. Of the white communities' *economically inactive* population, only 10% are students; whereas, aside from the Caribbean communities, for all other ethnic groups over half of their *economically inactive* fall into this sub-category: ranging from 53.3% of the African communities, to 60.4% of the Asian communities.
- White communities are the most likely to be long-term sick (12.9%), with Other communities being the least likely (4.1%).
- For those *looking after home or family*, Other communities are the most likely, 25.8%; and White communities are the least likely, 8.3%.
- And finally, for the *other* sub-category, Other communities are the least likely, 2.3%; and, African communities are the most likely at 18.9%.

In focus groups, we spoke to a large number of women, in particular, who identified themselves as *looking after home or family* who wanted to enter the labour market in the future but wanted to wait until their children had entered full-time education. However, they feared that they would not be able to do so because of the costs of childcare and the perception that the types of employment they would be able to obtain would neither offset the cost thereof, nor be conducive to family life.

Nobody was aware of the support available to families from the government, via tax credits and funded nursery hours, to mitigate the cost of childcare and felt that they needed assistance in order to navigate the process of obtaining that support. However, upon discovering that this financial support was available, a significant number of individuals said they would consider returning to work sooner, and almost all felt that this would make it easier to return at some point in the future.

### **1.4.3 Unemployed**

The *unemployed* are counted among the *economically active*, however, this report examines this group in isolation in order to more clearly define unemployment and more closely analyse the unequal share of the burden thereof experienced by minority communities in Forth Valley.

On the census questionnaire<sup>19</sup>, a series of questions were asked in order to determine whether the respondent was *unemployed* or *economically inactive*<sup>20</sup>: the distinction being made depends on the respondent's readiness to start work. If a respondent answered 'yes' to questions 25, 26, and 27 then they would be counted as *unemployed* as they match the definition of *unemployed* provided: without work, available to work, and actively seeking work. However, if the respondent answered 'no' to one or a combination of those questions then they would be considered *economically inactive* as they did not completely conform with the criteria that define *unemployed*.

#### **1.4.3.1 The Rate of Unemployment**

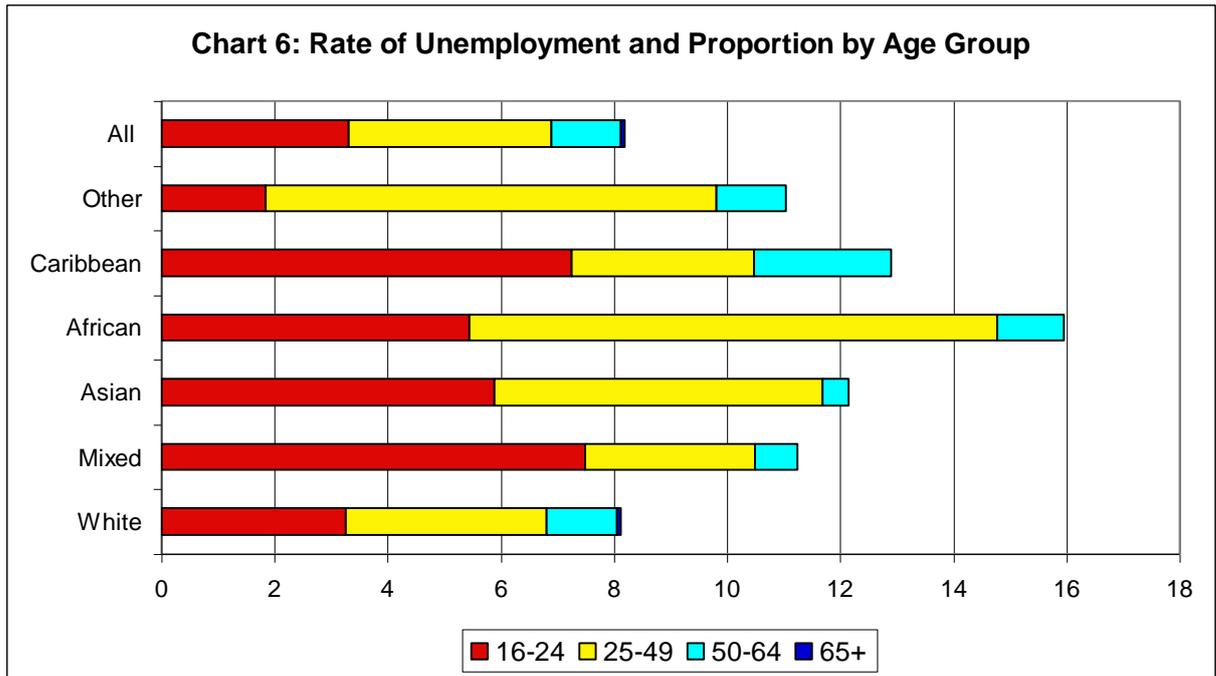
The Office for National Statistics defines the rate of unemployment as **the proportion of the economically active who are unemployed**. It is important to note that the unemployment rate is not the proportion of the total population who are unemployed, only the proportion of those who are currently engaging in the Labour Market (that is the employed plus the unemployed)<sup>21</sup>. This measure has been applied throughout this document.

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<sup>19</sup> [http://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/documents/Householdpre-addressed27\\_05\\_10specimen.pdf](http://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/documents/Householdpre-addressed27_05_10specimen.pdf),

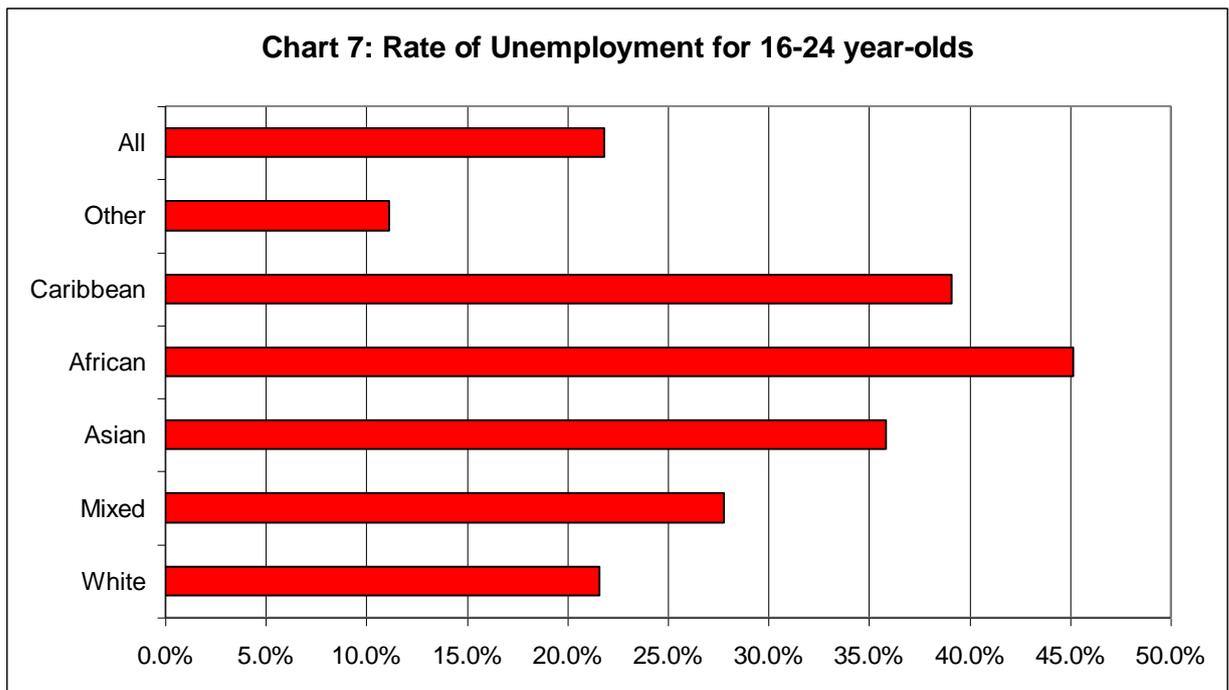
<sup>20</sup> Ibid, questions 24-29

<sup>21</sup> *Unemployment and the Claimant Count*, pp. 2



The rates of unemployment are greater for all minority communities. African communities experience almost double the rate of unemployment that White communities do: 16%, to 8.1%. At the time of the census, apart from the White communities, no other ethnic group experienced less than 10% of the *economically active* population being *unemployed*.

Men are more affected by unemployment than women; this is for the reasons already described: men are more likely to be *economically active*. However, it is young men who are most affected.



The rate of unemployment for 16-24 year-olds from all communities in Forth Valley was 21.8% at the time of the census. This contrasts with 6.3% for 25-49 year-olds, and 4.8% for 50-64 year-olds.

We can narrow the view to determine which particular group, in which particular area experiences the highest rate of unemployment. As such, the highest rate of unemployment is experienced by 16-24 year-old females from the African communities living in Clackmannanshire, with a rate of 100%. However, that is only one person and so it is quite a binary test of unemployment. Mixed males aged between 16-24 year-olds experience the second highest rate of unemployment at 60%. In contrast, the highest rate of unemployment for any White group is 27.9% experienced by 16-24 year-old males in Clackmannanshire.

For all age groups, those in African communities experience the highest rate of unemployment in Forth Valley, at 16%. However, at a local level, Other communities in Clackmannanshire experience the highest rate there at 18.8%; Caribbean communities in Falkirk experience the highest rate there at 15.7%; and, in Stirling, African communities experience the highest rate at 21.2%. In contrast, the worst affected White groups were found in Clackmannanshire, experiencing an unemployment rate of 9.3%.

#### ***1.4.3.2 The Burden of Unemployment***

While the rate of unemployment shows us the proportion of a community's labour supply that is not in employment, it does not provide the full context of the burden of unemployment experienced by communities. There is another means of examining that burden, through measuring the proportion of the *unemployed* against not only the *economically active*, but the *economically inactive* as well; in other words, against the entire population over 16.

14.9% of all (economically active and inactive) 16-24 year-olds from all communities in Forth Valley were unemployed at the time of the census; this contrasts with 5.5% of 25-49 year-olds. However, as with the rate of unemployment above, these trends are not universal and closer examination allows us to identify the most vulnerable groups<sup>22</sup>.

Across Forth Valley, for both males and females, 16-24 year-olds from the Caribbean communities were the most affected, with 25% identifying as being *unemployed* at the time of the Census. However, when we look at a more local level, the single most affected group is 16-24 year-old males from the Caribbean communities living in the Falkirk area with 44.4% identifying as *unemployed*.

For all age groups, those in the African community are the most likely across Forth Valley to be unemployed, which is the same for Scotland as a whole. However, at a local authority level, Caribbean communities in Falkirk, Other communities in

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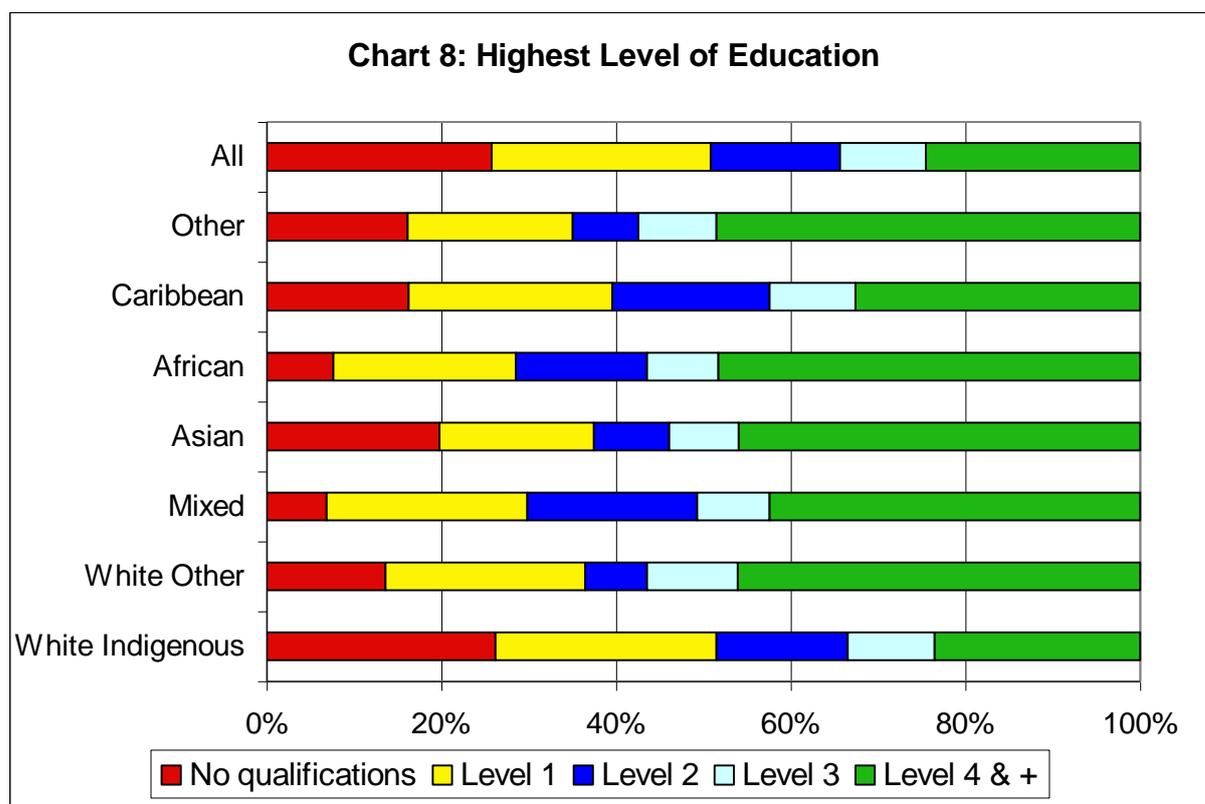
<sup>22</sup> For more detailed information, see *Appendix 3.10.*, pp. 87-94

Clackmannanshire, and African communities in Stirling are the most likely to be unemployed.

The burden of unemployment on minority ethnic communities is significantly higher than on White communities. The more people able to work, not doing so, often means that those who are in employment find their earnings spread more thinly as they have to provide for more people. Having so many young people unemployed traps minority communities in the cycle of unemployment as they lose the opportunity to gain the experience and qualifications they need in order to secure employment in the future.

Intervening can break this cycle and facilitate all communities enjoying the same access to the opportunities to prosper in Forth Valley. As minority communities begin to play a more important role in the economic future of the area, it is in Forth Valley's interests that the inequalities this section has highlighted be confronted and people be supported to overcome them.

## 1.5 Education



The data for Education Levels<sup>23</sup> in the census is given according to five categories:

1. *no qualifications*
2. *level 1* (O Grade, Standard Grade, National 5)
3. *level 2* (Higher, Advanced Higher)
4. *level 3* (HNC, HND)
5. *level 4* (undergraduate, postgraduate PhD)<sup>24</sup>

Nationally, minority ethnic communities are educated to a higher level than White communities. However, as we have seen, despite these significantly higher levels of educational attainment, minority ethnic communities are not able to translate that into better employment outcomes.

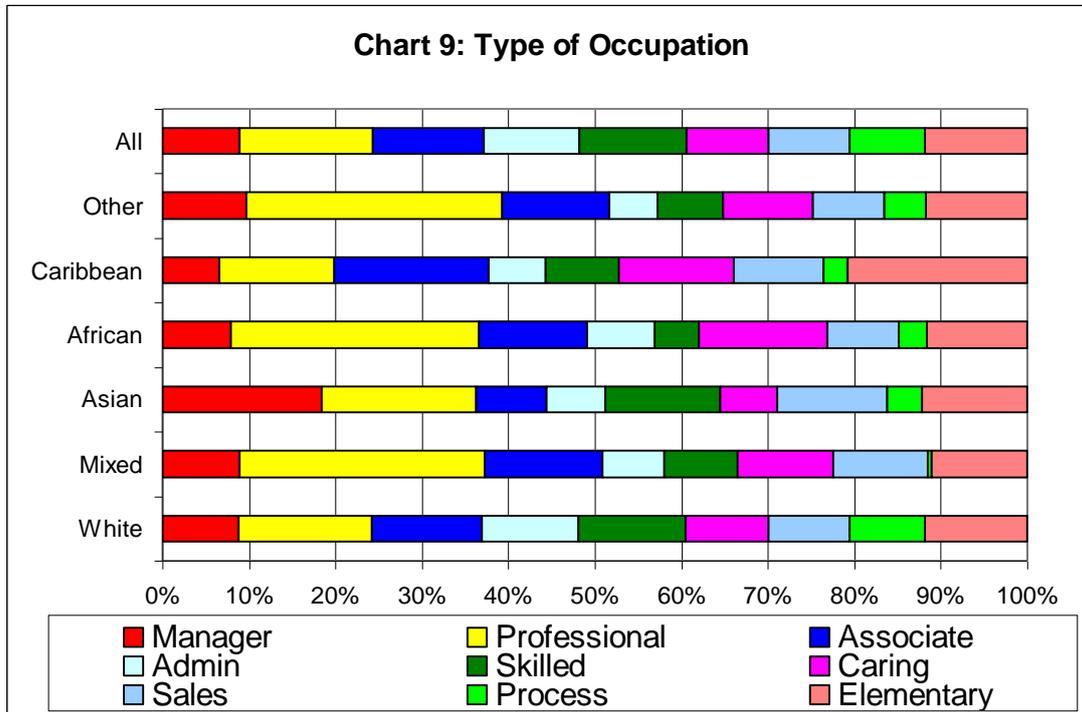
In Forth Valley, Other communities are the most likely to be university graduates with 48.5% of the total population being so. The White community, on the other hand, is the least likely, with 23.5% falling into this category.

White communities are the most likely to have *no qualifications*, 26.2%; Mixed communities are the least likely, 6.8%.

<sup>23</sup> All the qualifications include foreign equivalents and are not limited to qualifications obtained in the UK.

<sup>24</sup> For a more detailed breakdown of the qualifications, see Appendix 3.11, pp. 95

## 1.6 Occupation Type



While intuitively, occupation type may be linked with education, it is not possible to directly correlate one with the other from the data available in the census results, at least not for Forth Valley. The dataset for education is 243,954, while the dataset for occupation type is 141,906. There are a number of reasons why people with high levels of education might leave the labour force: illness; family commitments; further education; among many more.

There are no obvious inequalities that can be demonstrated by examining occupation type in that there is no means of determining the consequences of being employed in a certain role/sector, for example, salary is not known. While people from Asian communities are the most likely to be managers, there is no guarantee that that will translate into higher salaries and may be, in some way, a result of higher levels of self-employment within those communities.

However, from the survey run by this research, we know that of the 157 respondents who answered the question on whether they use/used their qualifications in their jobs, only 14% did, suggesting that at least for a great many people their level of education and job role they are in do not correspond. Yet, not everyone wanted to use their qualifications in Scotland. There were a number of reasons given for this: people did not like the field they trained in; their qualifications were not needed in the local economy; people wanted to dedicate themselves to learning new trades.

## **Part One**

### **Section 2: Barriers**

Exploring the census data provides the opportunity to statistically establish that there are differences between communities in relation to their economic status, however, it does not reveal the factors that may cause them. This section looks to explore some of the barriers to employment that are within the ability of a third-sector employability support projects to effect in Forth Valley.

There are a plethora of factors that combine to limit opportunities or compound people's ability to seize them that are arguably beyond the direct ability of employability projects to tackle properly: cultural conditioning; housing; schooling outcomes; visa restrictions, to name a few.

The barriers that this section explores can often be difficult to identify and quantify: individuals are not always able to perceive them; employers do not always realise their practices and processes foster them; and, those that perpetrate discrimination rarely admit they do so.

Nonetheless, there is a lot of agreement among national, international and local groups as to what the principal barriers are:

1. Discrimination
2. Lack of knowledge of employment laws and rights
3. Lack of work experience
4. Low confidence/aspirations
5. Language and culture;
6. Lack of knowledge of working practices and culture
7. Existing support provisions lack the full awareness of supporting individuals from minority backgrounds

However, compounding this is a series of other factors which are not unique to the minority communities but affect all people living in the area and must be considered when evaluating the ability of a project to deliver employability support in Forth Valley, for example transport, childcare, and a lack of knowledge of the support provisions available.

#### **2.1 Discrimination**

All the literature reviewed during our research ascribes a proportion of the explanation for lower employment rates to discrimination. Discrimination is very difficult to prove and its impact is not readily quantifiable. It is certainly not possible for this report to confirm that discrimination does take place locally. However, it is true that Forth Valley and all of its constituent parts fit within most other wider national trends and not separate thereto. Therefore there is no reason to believe that the local situation would differ.

It is important to recognise that discrimination can affect people from minority communities both as a barrier to employment and as a limitation therein. The information that we have been able to obtain only speaks to the experience of those in work.

In March 2015, a Freedom of Information request was submitted to the Ministry of Justice, looking to obtain information regarding the number of discrimination complaints made in the Forth Valley over the last tax year. The request looked at six types of discrimination cases:

- age
- disability
- religion and belief
- sexual orientation
- race
- sex.

Across Scotland, between the 1<sup>st</sup> of May 2014 and the 31<sup>st</sup> of December 2014, 417 discrimination complaints were received; 19 (4.6%) were from complainants in Forth Valley, none of whom lodged race discrimination cases.

It is not possible to assert that as a result of the lower proportion of complaints being made in Forth Valley that therefore, Forth Valley is above average in terms of combating discrimination. The survey and focus groups demonstrated that there are perceptions of discrimination in the workplace. 30.8% of respondents to the survey felt that they were treated differently to their white native colleagues by their bosses. However, the figure rose to 35.9% when their treatment by their peers and colleagues was considered.

The focus groups gave the following reasons for this feeling of different treatment:

1. There was a feeling that there were different expectations of migrant workers as opposed to indigenous colleagues. This ranged from being expected to work harder for allegedly, less money, despite having the same job descriptions.
2. As part of the different expectations, people felt that whenever they performed their role to a lower standard to their usual but in line with their White Indigenous colleagues, they were reprimanded for 'slacking'.
3. There was a perception that White Indigenous colleagues were given preference when booking holidays. When it came to swapping shifts, people felt that White Indigenous colleagues were allowed to do this, minority employees' requests were almost always denied.
4. There were allegations of open harassment by colleagues including being told that they were 'stealing jobs' from white indigenous people. This resulted in individuals fearing going to work.

When those affected by discrimination were asked about what they thought they could do about their situations, they all responded that the best means of tackling it was to find a new job and leave. This may in some way help to explain why people are not lodging discrimination complaints with the Tribunals Services.

This report was not able to assess the impact of discriminatory practices from barring people from entering employment. It is important to note that the individuals who raised concerns about their companies were employed.

However, the present impact of discrimination is not confined to current practices. The consequences of past discriminatory practices by organisations have led to disenfranchisement with organisations' contemporary guises. It has proven difficult for some, predominantly older members of minority ethnic communities, to reconcile past practices and attitudes with current, institutional and organisational processes and practices.

This feeling of disenfranchisement is perpetuated by the 'slow rate of progress' as one focus group participant described the situation. The major public authorities operating in Forth Valley, as yet, do not reflect the communities they serve<sup>25</sup>. Furthermore, those national public authorities (Police Scotland, the NHS) find their operations in Forth Valley have proportionally fewer members of staff from minority communities than their national average. These organisations are making improvements but it will take some time before the effects are visible and the perception of change is felt.

Several focus group participants, predominantly from minority ethnic communities, expressed the view that current drives towards equal opportunities are mere lip-service and the question that more often arises is 'what has happened as a result of these changes?'

In our discussions with public authorities and employers, it has become apparent that many find it difficult to reach people from minority communities and that applicants for roles within their organisations have not been forthcoming. Meanwhile the perception of discrimination and the belief that roles with such organisations are 'not for us' have lowered people from minority communities' aspirations and this is also a contributing factor to slow progress. But, it must be stressed, not a fault of minority communities themselves.

Discrimination remains a significant factor in the employability of the Forth Valley's minority populations. However, its impact is neither necessarily direct nor personal and the onus of overcoming it falls not only on the public authorities and employers but also on the communities themselves. Better channels of communication are required to improve opportunities for all.

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<sup>25</sup> See Appendix 3, pp 102 - 109.

## **2.2 Knowledge of Working Rights and Employer Obligations**

While not necessarily a barrier to employment, the lack of knowledge of employment rights and employers' obligations to their employees is intrinsically linked to discrimination. As mentioned in the previous section, discrimination is not limited to barring access to employment but also manifest within the workplace.

Understanding workers' rights and employers' duties thereto is fundamental to empowering people to overcome discriminatory practices. However, the survey results demonstrated that much work is to be done in order to achieve this. In discussions with partner organisations, we found that some are engaged in attempting to educate migrant workers as to their working rights. However, established minority communities and indigenous minorities were neglected in this regard, as the initiatives to improve awareness were exclusive to English Language courses run by Forth Valley College.

Further compounding the situation for indigenous minority populations is the possible lack of awareness among their elder generations as to the norms and practices of British employment law. This situation was highlighted in discussions with one of Falkirk's Mosques, wherein discussions focused less on elder generations who were born outside the UK but their children, who were born and raised in Scotland. The feeling was that perhaps their children were at a disadvantage as a result of their parents and/or grandparents' lack of knowledge of employment rights here in the UK.

They felt they were unclear as to the laws regarding racial discrimination in employment, and as a result, felt they were unaware of how to go about challenging discrimination at that level. This is largely due to the fact that often these cases are not necessarily criminal, that is to say dealt with by the police, but rather handled by the Tribunal services.

The influence of an individual's experience of employment in their country of origin can also significantly impact their ability to perceive unfair practices. A woman from Central and Eastern Europe described how she agreed to leave her job as a result of "her own actions and inability to meet the demands of her role without help": she was pregnant. Unaware of British employment rights, the woman 'agreed' with her employer that because she was unable to fulfil the more rigorous aspects of her job without assistance from somebody else as she entered her third trimester, she should leave the company. The woman stated that it was '[her] fault' she lost her job. Other women in the focus group felt the experience resonated with their own and stated that they had come under similar pressure to leave their jobs upon becoming pregnant. However, due to a greater awareness of their legal rights, they refused their employers' requests.

Clouding the individual's judgment in this instance was a lack of knowledge of employment rights, and this led to her accepting the discriminatory practices she experienced.

Survey participants were asked, 'do you think you know enough about your working rights here in the UK?', 76% answered 'no'. Predominantly, the 24% who did feel they knew enough were from two English for Employability classes run by Forth

Valley College, in which students were preparing for English exams but with specific focus on employability.

### **2.3 Limited Networks**

Knowing the right people and having contacts is argued to be one of the most effective ways of coming to hear about job opportunities, if not of getting jobs. Having a network of contacts therefore is an important aspect of job-searching<sup>26</sup>. Immigration is itself a network-driven phenomenon, with friends, family and compatriots often providing the resources and support<sup>27</sup>. This is something that was demonstrated through our focus groups, the vast majority of participants had come to Forth Valley as a result of the presence of friends and family in the area who were able to assist in securing employment, or able to provide materiel support for the purposes of job searching.

While these networks are hugely important, they are often limited. For this reason, migrant workers tend to be concentrated in certain sectors and in certain work places. In Forth Valley, this is certainly true of the food processing industry and hospitality sector. This concentration of migrant workers limits their experience of the labour markets and its mechanisms, which in turn puts them at a disadvantage when seeking to branch out into the wider labour market.

Young people from minority communities are particularly vulnerable to the consequences of limited networks in that the support their parents can offer them in looking for jobs is finite. There is a tendency that young people follow their parents into low-skilled, low-paid jobs, irrespective of their academic attainment and competencies.

Similarly, highly-skilled workers rely on these limited networks when they first arrive to find work that can help them establish themselves. In the focus groups, a number of experienced, highly-skilled workers explained that they initially arrived in the UK, following family or friends with the promise of work. They found work in low-skilled, low-paid industries and as a result, lost their practical experience in their fields which made finding work therein increasingly challenging, verging on impossible. This ultimately led to them finding themselves trapped in low-skilled employment; and for those that have managed to transition into employment suited to their skills, the journey took several years.

Limited networks constrict the opportunities people can exploit in the job-searching process. While they prove invaluable to people's ability to establish themselves in the area, they can trap people in employment in low-paid, low-skilled work in more precarious industries.

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<sup>26</sup> Froy and Pyne, pp 37

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, pp. 37

## **2.4 Work Experience and Employment Opportunities**

Having quantifiable, verifiable work experience is recognised as being a major factor in an employer's decision to hire an applicant or not. People from minority communities are often at a disadvantage in this regard for several reasons:

- their work experience is in a different system;
- they are trained according to different regulations and requirements;
- they are unable to provide references which are easily obtainable by and understandable to employers;
- their skills and training are not necessary in the local economy and not easily transferred to suit the needs thereof<sup>28</sup>.

Many of the people this research has engaged with highlighted their difficulty in obtaining work due to a lack of experience in the local labour market, but not necessarily in the sector or industry itself. As a result, many of the participants were only able to secure jobs in low-skilled industries and are not utilising their skills and experience in their current jobs. This perpetuates their inability to obtain the relevant experience employers are looking for in applicants.

The survey also asked the question, 'have your qualifications been officially recognised in the UK?'. 21.7% answered 'yes'. The vast majority answered that they did not know (49%) or no (29.3%). When asked about whether they thought their employers would understand their qualifications, 56% answered no.

The focus groups looked into whether or not individuals had applied for jobs in the sectors their qualifications were suited to and what the outcomes of that had been. Generally, most had not. Those individuals who had not explained that they felt their English inhibited them and to a large extent did not expect to ever enter those sectors here in Scotland.

However, they also explained that they lacked confidence in their foreign qualifications being recognised by prospective employers, fearing that from an employer's perspective there is a real lack of clarity as to how to interpret them.

Those facing particular problems were: teachers, medical practitioners, and nursery nurses/teachers. The reason behind this is often not so much due to a lack of demand among employers to hire them, but rather as a result of the qualifications not being accepted in the British system. Retraining is required for these professions.

Furthermore, individuals have found that the requirements for entering the retraining courses both at university and college level are different for people from different parts of the world. Several trained nurses from Asian backgrounds mentioned the fact that the level of English required of non-EU nationals was higher than that of EU nationals. As a result, some of the individuals found that they were not being accepted onto training course, but friends applying from EU countries with lower IELTS scores than theirs, were.

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<sup>28</sup> Froy and Pyne, pp. 41

This led to quite a feeling of discrimination and bewilderment as to why requirements are different depending on your country of birth.

Moreover, many of the participants who wanted to undertake vocational retraining courses found that often this meant starting afresh and beginning in the first year of the courses as opposed to gaining accelerated entry. This then often causes the individuals to reassess the financial viability of attending full-time education and often results in them withdrawing from the application process.

## **2.5 Low Confidence**

Many reports into barriers to employment for those from minority communities draw attention to low motivation and lack of confidence as a major barrier which to some extent is self-imposed. The principal contributors to low confidence and motivation tend to be:

1. discrimination
2. English language skills
3. few positive role models
4. lack the awareness of job-seeking practices confidence.

Low confidence was evident among many of the participants in the focus groups particularly in relation to their English language knowledge. We found that participant's lack of confidence in their language abilities is enough to inhibit them from pursuing jobs outside their comfort-zones. Many people said they wanted to open their own businesses but used their English-language abilities as an excuse not to, they themselves recognised that they were hiding behind excuses but we not confident enough of navigating the business world to be able to successfully realise their aspirations.

## **2.6 Language and Culture**

Transcending all of the barriers, particularly for first-generation immigrants, who may have recently arrived or be long settled in the UK, is the different cultural and linguistic traditions that form the cultural reference-points against which people measure *normal*.

People's English-language knowledge has been indentified as the single greatest barrier to overcome by first generation immigrants<sup>29</sup>. There are many aspects that interact to compound this situation and these originate not only in the immigrant population but also within the white native population. Due to the general population's lack of knowledge of foreign languages, there is a lack of understanding of the difficulties of acclimatisation to the norms and manners of the host country.

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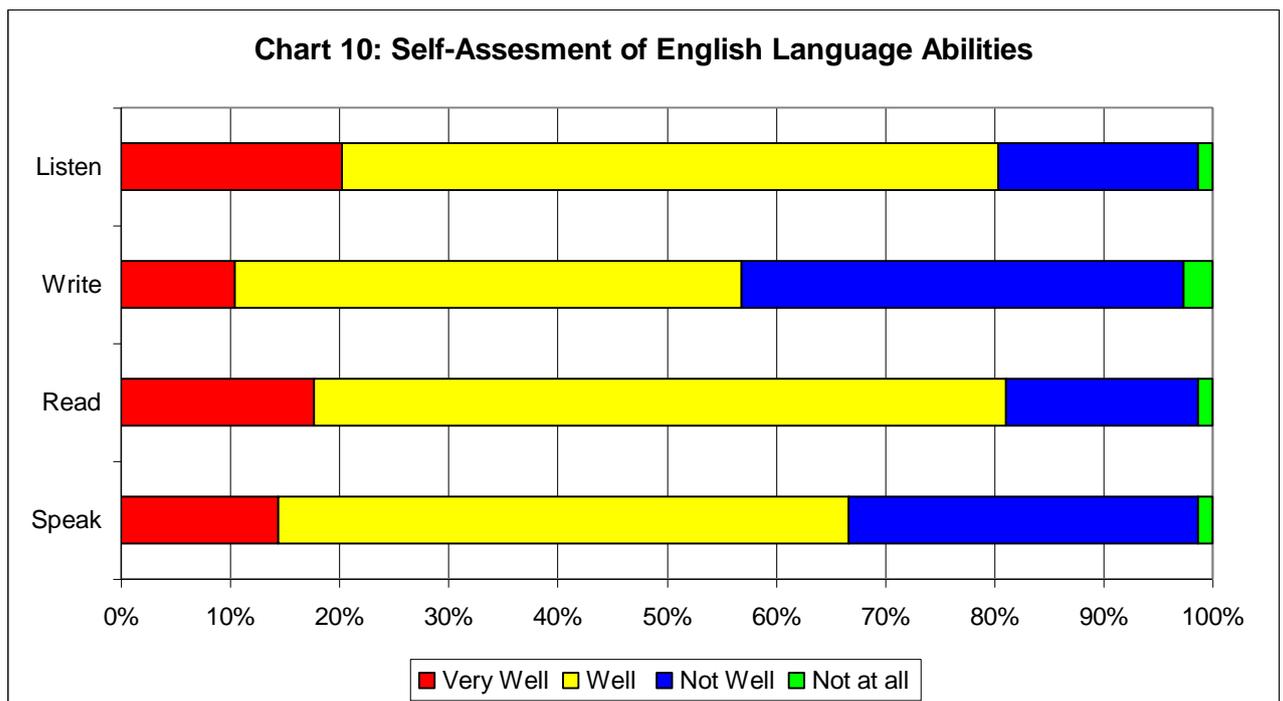
<sup>29</sup> Glasgow Works, 'Working with Ethnic Minority Clients: A Toolkit for Employability Partnerships and Projects', <<http://www.employabilityinscotland.com/learning-materials/capacity-building/working-with-ethnic-minorities-clients-2011/>>, pp. 25

This lack of knowledge compounds the immigrants' own lack of knowledge of the host culture, in that people are less patient, less forgiving of mistakes and less understanding of the cultural differences which are manifested in the way the individual interacts both verbally and physically.

For example, many native speakers of both Slavonic and Romance languages have a tendency to use imperative constructions far more often than a native English-speaker would. Imperative constructions come across as more abrupt and less polite in English, whereas for speakers of those languages it is neither, rather the opposite.

Respondents to the survey were asked how they felt about their English-language abilities and were asked about each of the four skills: reading, listening, speaking, and writing. In terms of their *productive* skills (speaking and writing) most people responded that they spoke and wrote English well, however, a significant number (40.5%) also answered 'not well'.

In terms of their *receptive* skills (reading and understanding), respondents were more confident with the vast majority (60.4% and 63.1% respectively) feeling they read and understood English well.



The survey also asked respondents if they felt they could work in an English-speaking environment, 81% answered they could, however, in discussions afterwards most people felt that they would prefer to avoid client-facing roles and did not feel that necessarily they could begin to work in more office-based roles.

The 19% who felt they could not, were predominantly in lower level ESOL groups and felt that within time they would be able to transition into work in an English-speaking environment.

## **2.7 Understanding of the Culture of Work**

Besides these types of linguistic norms, the culture of work tends to differ between countries and crucially the expectations of employers on their employees differ. In some instances, people mentioned differences in work dress, time-keeping, implicit requirements of employers in terms of unexpressed expectations of employees, e.g. remaining in work until the tasks for the day are completed, which may or may not require working extra but for no additional financial recompense. These differences are further compounded by the differences that exist between industries and even companies within sectors.

The implications, it was felt, of these differences resulted in the respondents feeling ill-prepared for entering work environments which were not accustomed to the temperament of their own cultures. There was a feeling of security in those businesses that employed people from minority communities, particularly those from Central and Eastern Europe.

Of the survey sample, despite the fact that 70% of those questioned felt they understood the culture of work in the UK, 75% felt they wanted help to better understand it, meaning that potentially as many as 64% of the people who said they felt they understood still wanted support to better understand it.

## **2.8 Existing Support Provisions**

It may seem an oversight to have placed existing support provisions in a section about barriers. It is here because, while they are definitely not a barrier to or within employment, they can be a barrier to people accessing support. As employability projects move towards more generalist services, acting on economies of scale, the possibility exists that these drives will dissuade some ethnic groups from engaging<sup>30</sup> as specialist knowledge of their particular issues is lost.

Survey respondents were asked a series of questions about the principal employability support services in Forth Valley:

1. The Local Council
2. Forth Valley College
3. The Salvation Army
4. Citizens Advice Bureaux
5. Skills Development Scotland
6. Jobcentre Plus

When asked if they felt these service providers could help them personally, 24% of the survey respondents answered *no*. In discussions, they explained that they did not feel these organisations understood their needs; and, furthermore, because of their

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<sup>30</sup> Malcolm Sayers and Eddie Follan, 'Understanding Poverty: Exploring Critical Issues in Poverty in Scotland, Seminar 1: Poverty and Ethnicity in Scotland', *The Poverty Alliance*, <[http://povertyalliance.org/userfiles/files/PA-JRF\\_PovertyEthnicity\\_Seminar050811\\_FINAL.pdf](http://povertyalliance.org/userfiles/files/PA-JRF_PovertyEthnicity_Seminar050811_FINAL.pdf)>, pp.7

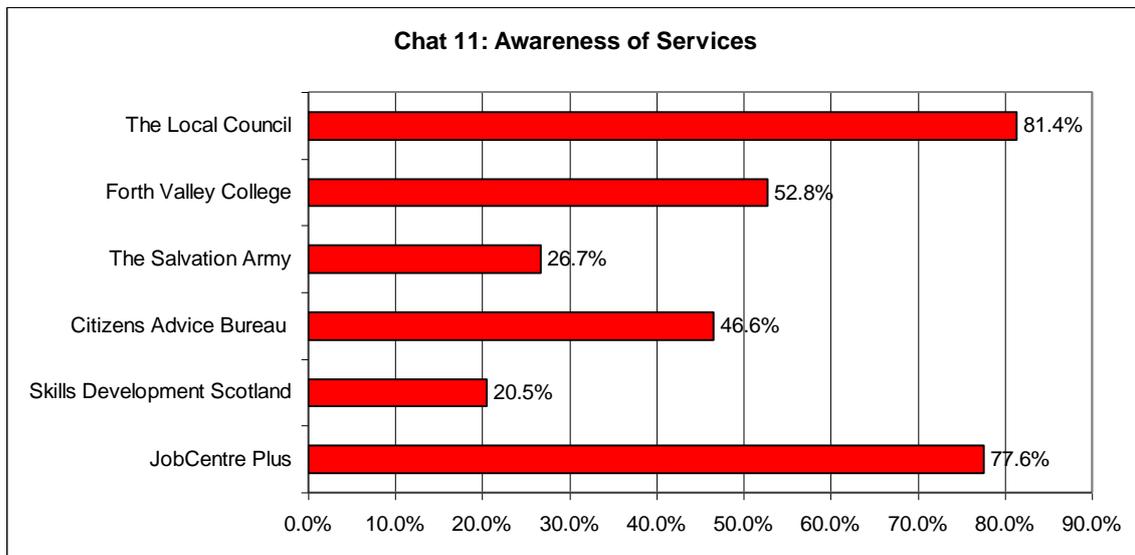
level of English, the survey respondents themselves felt they would not be able to fully utilise the services.

This feeling resonated with some of the issues partner organisations highlighted when we discussed their services with them. Generally, across all the service providers, it was felt that minority communities were underrepresented among their clients and that they struggled to increase foot-fall from minority communities.

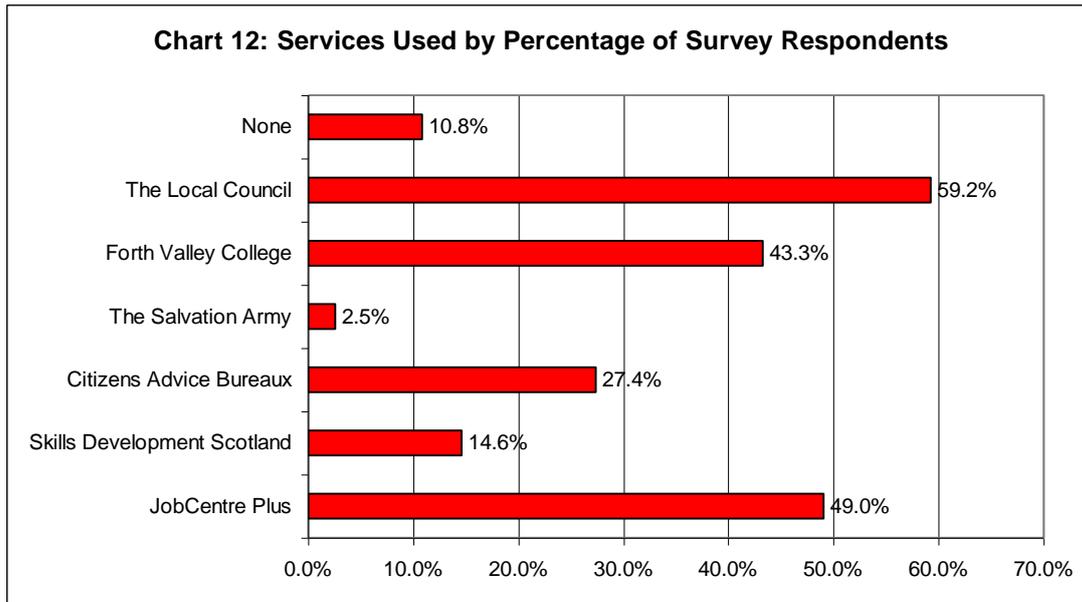
There are two potential factors contributing to this under-use of services:

1. Many projects have very limited advertising budgets to be able to reach people and often rely on referrals and word-of-mouth, resulting in a lack of awareness of services available in the area among minority communities.
2. Some clients from minority backgrounds have the perception that the projects lack awareness of the issues they face.

Of the survey respondents, most were unaware of these organisations and unaware of the help they offer. The most well-known and well-used was the Jobcentre, however, this knowledge and use was largely limited to obtaining a National Insurance Number. The Local Councils were the second most recognised and their services were known about but this is largely because many of the survey respondents were ESOL learners in their classes.



However, that the awareness of services does not directly translate into using the services: while over half of respondents knew about services, less than a third had used them on average.



This is all despite the fact that 82.5% of survey respondents, 129 people, felt they needed help and wanted help to find a new job or progress in their job.

Perhaps, this is down to the fact that, predominantly, employability support offered locally is conventional, that is to say that the service providers offer traditional support provisions: CV writing, interview skills, access to the internet, etc. This type of support is vital and fundamental to helping people transition into work, however, for the particular client group being discussed in this report, it is often not sufficient.

As we have explored in this section, clients from minority communities often require a slightly higher level of intervention, particularly more recent arrivals for whom English is a foreign language. There may be different approaches to employment etiquette in their country of origin, which could lead to a misinterpretation of their performance in an interview or in work itself. While these issues can be overcome by the individuals themselves, intervention can hasten the process and lead to better results faster.

The specialist support that people from minority backgrounds need is not offered locally. While important interventions are made by local service providers, economies of scale result in them offering general support which a sizeable proportion of the survey respondents thought could not help them personally and for this reason they did not use those services, despite overwhelmingly wanting help.

## **2.9 Transport**

Problems with transport are not unique to minority communities, but it is something that does act as a barrier to employment for them. Public transport is expensive in the area and this was highlighted as a barrier to people looking to certain employment outwith their immediate geographical area. It was felt that anything outside an hour's commute would be too far for people to consider, however, depending on the job, people were prepared to travel or re-locate.

Anything beyond one hour's commute is likely to be very expensive. For example, there were a number of people who lived in Clackmannanshire but worked in Callander. The ticket prices for that commute can range from £1328 – 2730 per annum. It all depends on the buyer's reserves and ability to meet the up-front costs: to get the cheapest price you need to have £1328 as that is the cost for the annual pass. Thereafter, it would be either 13 instalments of £139.20; 52 instalments of £42.30; or, daily costs of £10.50.

The costs of transport around Forth Valley is a major barrier to people's ability to accept offers of employment because people often end up losing money on longer commutes than gaining extra. In the instance of the example above, the cost of the commute alone represents between 12-24% of their take-home salary.

## **2.10 Childcare**

A significant consideration when job-seeking, in particular for mothers, is the cost of childcare. Of the people this research has engaged with, we found that most women who indicated that they are not currently working would not be classified as *unemployed* but rather *economically inactive* because they are looking after young families.

Many of the stay-at-home-mothers we spoke to stated that they intended to return to work in the future, however, were often put off doing so until their children entered school so as to make it financially viable/worthwhile. Childcare is expensive and a great many of the individuals surveyed were unaware of the support available in covering the cost of childcare. Those who were, felt the process was too opaque and complex.

In order to begin to receive support towards the cost of childcare, first the individual has to be paying for childcare. They then are able to apply for support, however, are not able to gauge financial value of support prior to applying, it is only upon learning the outcome from HMRC that the individual is made aware. The process of the system presents too big a risk for individuals to feel confident that they will be better off taking on work.

Furthermore, given the level of bureaucracy involved in applying for the support, people with a lower level of English are often unable to complete the forms without support.

## **Part Two**

### **Support Strategy**

## **Part 2: Support Strategy**

Having established the inequalities faced by minority communities in Forth Valley, and explored some of the barriers that impede people's employment opportunities, it falls on this part of the document to elaborate on what our research has determined to be the best means of supporting people into work and therein in the context of Forth Valley, with a view to quality, sustainable work.

There is a general consensus among the literature reviewed and partners consulted that the most successful projects are ones that are:

- Appealing
- Accessible
- Meaningful
- Holistic

These four principles combine to form an approach to employability support that both in theory and in practice draws as many people as possible to it, from as wide a range of communities as possible, making a difference to their knowledge of the mechanics of job-seeking, while tackling as broad a spectrum of barriers as feasibly possible for localised, third-sector initiatives.

We strongly recommend that compliance with these four criteria form the foundation of any and all interventions that seek to support people from minority communities into work and therein. These four principles might sound very vague and so this section explores more fully what is meant by them and how they might be realised.

We want to be very clear, what we recommend is this appealing, accessible, meaningful, and holistic approach to employability support. The interventions we highlight are the ones that we consider the most effective and viable in Forth Valley, and delivering them should be seen within the context of this approach to employability support. We recognise that it is likely to be beyond the scope of an individual project to deliver all the interventions necessary and so building an integrated network of service providers, mutually supporting one another and referring to one another, underpins the ability of this approach to reach its optimal efficacy.

It is very difficult in isolation for an individual employability project to comprehensively support its clients into quality, sustainable employment. Many of the barriers that impede a person's attempt to secure work require specialist knowledge and experience in order to be able to support them in overcoming them. It is with this in mind that we recommend an approach that is **accessible, appealing, meaningful, and holistic**.

## **Section 1: Appealing**

Employability support has to be appealing. It has to attract people and partners. It may seem an obvious aspect of any project but that does not preclude it from being overlooked. As we explored in the previous section, not all support attracts clients from minority backgrounds. For that reason, there is a need to deliver a set of interventions that prospective clients will see as being effective support for them in overcoming some of the difficulties they face. There are two stages to achieving this:

1. Engagement with the target clients at the design stage so that the project is rooted in the problems local people face and want help with.
2. As the project develops and begins to deliver for people, continuing to listen to what clients need and want.

It is essential that the project listen to the needs of local people. While it is true that there is a strong degree of commonality between geographical areas, there are, to a greater or lesser extent, local conditions that will reorder the hierarchy of barriers to tackle. Listening to the target client group before and during a project ensures that the project is tailored to the existential problems local people face. Furthermore it ensures that the project is designed with an in-built appreciation of the need to develop an adaptable approach that is centred on the client and their needs, as opposed to the routine of the process of support.

Listening to people also engenders a degree of accountability to the clients and a sense of ownership thereamong. If people feel more responsible for the direction of the project, they are more likely to engage and remain engaged. Accountability to the clients also instils an ethos in the project that strives always to ensure the interventions are flexible and adapt to meet the needs of particular clients, maintaining their relevance to changing conditions in the wider economy.

Maintaining a client-focused approach is central to the project's ability to deliver long-lasting support that is rooted in the existential problems of individuals and not theoretical problems.

## **Section 2: Accessible**

Accessibility is not limited to the location of the service but closely entwined with the appeal of the project in terms of facilitating people's ability/opportunity to engage. This section will focus on the types of considerations that any employability project in Forth Valley needs to take into account when designing a support programme.

They include looking into:

1. Marketing
2. Translation and Interpretation
3. Managing the Language Used
4. Client Support Costs
5. Outreach

## 2.1 Marketing

Often neglected by service providers is the need to continually market the service. This does not need to be in the form of expensive press advertising campaigns but link-ups with relevant partner organisations and targeting advertising to places frequented by the target audience: make sure the partner organisations, other service providers are aware of what is on offer to help them disseminate information about the support.

The risks of not advertising services can be damaging to the reputation and outcomes of the project. By relying on word-of-mouth to attract clients, the project can become 'cliquey'. The consequences of this should not be underestimated especially for projects offering support to all minority communities.

In the past, employability projects focused on minority communities tended to have disproportionate numbers of clients from one community, which can deter people from other communities from coming forward for support.

In addition to this, not advertising can mean that people in need of support do not access it and the need is underestimated in the area, as is the case with Falkirk Council's ESOL provision. Maintaining a steady flow of service uptake requires regular advertising; other local service providers saw a gradual decline in the uptake of their services as a result of not actively marketing their services<sup>31</sup>.

The Discover Opportunities project in Dundee uses targeted leafleting campaigns to reach their clients. They have printed leaflets in twelve languages and volunteers go door-to-door in neighbourhoods wherein there are higher minority populations. They speak to people at their doors, and give them the leaflet in the language requested. This helps them ensure that their services are well-recognised and utilised.

The Scottish Neighbourhoods Statistics can be used to obtain the required information in order to determine which areas to target. They allow for user-defined searches and this can be used to determine the ethnic composition of narrow areas. Likewise, local councils often hold information on the ethnic diversity of local areas and have more of an idea as to where people live within their communities; information departments are generally well-equipped to process such requests without having to revert to formally submitting a Freedom of Information request.

Furthermore, the Royal Mail can be used for a blanket leaflet-drop within postcode areas, and these can be as narrow as the first four figures of the postcode. At the moment, the service is offered at a cost of £50.14 per thousand houses.

It is also important to consider where people frequent and what services people use: doctors' surgeries; supermarket notice-boards; council buildings; small businesses run by people from minority backgrounds and for people from those communities are also good places to advertise in, for example, Polish shops.

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<sup>31</sup> Aspire Project, Stirling.

Throughout our research, we have attempted to engage with as many community groups and individuals as possible. In the past, a number of groups existed which were representative of their communities. However, as time has gone on many of these groups have migrated online and exist almost exclusively as social media groups.

The spread of online forums offering support has also led to a decline in these groups and this makes reaching people more problematic. Utilising social media and engaging in forums for minority groups in the local area can be an effective means of reaching a wider client-base.

## **2.2 Client Support Costs**

Within the context of Forth Valley, it is important to consider supporting clients with their transportation costs. Particularly those living in more rural areas who need to travel into town.

Surplus to the running cost of the project, in order for beneficiaries to take full advantage of the support on offer, it is necessary to allocate funding to cover essential costs incurred by the client. This can include assisting in covering childcare, transportation costs to and from work placements, interviews etc.

Employability support is, more often than not, offered to individuals facing economic difficulties and budgets will not always be able to be stretched to afford the indirect costs of accessing the support.

These costs should not be seen as integral to the running costs of the project but additional to that and not included in the calculations for the cost to beneficiary ratio.

## **2.3 Manage the Language Used**

In many cases, the clients accessing support will be non-native speakers of English. It is therefore important to use language that is simple and avoids unnecessary complication. At the same time, however, it is important to remember that this does not mean that the client is of lower-intellect/less educated, simply their grasp of English is not the equivalent of a native-speaker.

When producing literature and any written materials for projects, clarity of expression is essential to avoid any confusion; avoid idioms and ambiguous terminology.

## **2.4 Interpreting and Translating**

It will be necessary to budget for translation and interpreting services. This can range from getting project literature translated so that it can be readily available for speakers of the main languages found in the area: Polish, Russian, Hungarian, Urdu, Hindi,

Punjabi, Mandarin and Cantonese. These will likely be a one-off costs, unless there are changes to be made to the original documents.

However, when engaging with some clients, interpreters may be required for the initial assessment stage. The provision of interpreters is vital for engaging some of the most vulnerable clients from these communities. The knowledge that an interpreter will be available at the initial consultation can help ensure people that the project is intended for them also, and that they will be able to get the support they need. Many people have stated in the focus groups that they have not used the services of other organisations, not only those providing employability support but also health, advice support, because they are not confident that they will be understood.

There are some clients who will fall into this category, however, the number is small. For those in need of this assistance, there are certain considerations to be made:

The Bridges Programmes will not put clients forward for work placements if their level of English is below Access 1. This is primarily because below this level, the individual is at risk of being unable to fully comprehend instructions and information regarding their health and safety in the workplace.

The same determination was made by the Department of Works and Pensions: as of November 2014, all people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance whose level of English is below Access 1, are required to attend compulsory English language courses in order to receive their JSA. This is primarily for the same reason as the Bridges Programmes.

For this reason, effective partnerships are necessary in order to ensure that these clients receive the support they require. In this instance, referral to some of the ESOL providers in the area is absolutely essential.

The councils run free ESOL classes and are more geared towards lower level learners. The Stirling School of English is also a fantastic resource. It runs at a minimal registration fee of £50, though this can be subsidised, and the learner can access up to 14 hours of lessons a week. All levels are supported and the charity is not locked into accepting clients from a geographical area; as long as the learner can attend lessons in Stirling, they will be welcomed.

## **2.5 Outreach**

Delivering a project across Forth Valley requires mobility. Often the clients of employability projects will have access to fewer financial resources, inhibiting their ability to afford the costs of travelling to another council area for support. Partnership working is essential to being able to provide outreach surgeries for projects. Agreements between organisations should include access to one another's infrastructure which will reduce unnecessary costs and provide greater access to more areas.

It is not necessary to run outreach surgeries everywhere all of the time. As and when a need presents itself, projects should weigh the cost benefit ratio of bringing the client

to the staff or the staff to the client. As already mentioned, it may be that covering the client's bus fare is a more sensible option in some instances. Nonetheless, projects have to have that level of flexibility in order to ensure the project reaches as many vulnerable clients as possible.

The public authorities are perhaps best placed to offer infrastructural support. Local-authority run community centres and libraries are ideal venues for running outreach surgeries. Jobcentre Plus also can provide space in its offices depending. In these instances, staff can travel to outlying areas with laptops and deliver the same support as would be on offer to those attending the project's base. Thus affording more people easier access to the support they need.

## **Section 3: Meaningful**

*Meaningful* can be quite a vague term; essentially, it is intended to mean that the project should make lasting differences to people's lives and the local community. It is not possible in advance to anticipate the exact types of interventions that will categorically achieve this end, however, there are processes that can help steer a project to being meaningful.

In this section we will look at:

1. Monitoring Outcomes
2. Empowering People

### **3.1 Monitoring Outcomes**

There are several benefits of monitoring outcomes:

- It is a means of informing the delivery of the project throughout its duration by highlighting strengths and weakness.
- It allows you to measure the impact of the project both in the short and the long term.
- It is likely necessary to comply with the funding requirements.

There are dangers for projects as they mature that monitoring outcomes can help to prevent. Some projects can fall into the routine of the process and fail to respond to individuals' needs, giving priority to the structure of the process as opposed to the client. Continually monitoring the efficacy of interventions maintains focus on results and engenders a flexible approach that responds to changing circumstances in the local and national economy, and allows for areas highlighted as being weaker to be improved. Effectively, monitoring allows a project to see what works and what does not. It allows the project to either abandon or strengthen those areas that are not achieving results.

Furthermore, monitoring outcomes should not be seen as limited to the direct effect of the project. Projects should work with employers to monitor how applicants and interviewees fare in companies' recruitment processes. It may be that there are commonalities among unsuccessful applicants at both the CV and interview stages that inhibit them from securing offers of employment. Analysis of this information can help the project tailor its support to overcoming existential problems that may or may not have their origin in the beneficiaries themselves.

Interventions can be targeted at employers and clients. For example, employers might be supported should it prove that there are commonalities originating in cultural misunderstandings as opposed to arising from the applicants' personality, character, or experience. Where the problems originate in a lack of tangible work experience, the project can intervene to provide the candidate with work placements for example.

It is incumbent upon companies to begin to monitor this information and feed it back to partner organisations supporting applicants. Lessons can be learned from the mistakes of the past and should it prove that there is a commonality running through unsuccessful applicants, then interventions can be made to remedy them.

Monitoring unsuccessful applicants for common trends and collating the results can be invaluable to the individuals preparing applications and for interviews, and the organisations supporting them through the process.

The value of monitoring outcomes should not be underestimated in terms of the project's ability to deliver meaningful support. When resources are stretched and demand puts pressure on the time commitments of staff, maintaining the system of monitoring can be neglected. This will only be to the detriment of the overall success of the project.

### **3.2 Empowering Beneficiaries**

Another pitfall for projects can be that it assumes the responsibility for the clients and fails to encourage them to act for themselves. This can result in the beneficiaries developing a dependency on the help of the project rather than empowered thereby.

Empowerment can mean lots of things. In this situation, the most empowering aspect will be encouraging self-sufficiency: inculcating the individual with the skills and knowledge to find work so that in the future they can do it for themselves.

The design of this approach has empowerment always in mind. The provisions that we will explore in the next section are always focused on teaching the beneficiaries the skills and knowledge to find jobs for themselves in the future. It is crucial that projects *show* rather than *do* for their clients.

## **Section 4: Holistic**

This section focuses less on the process of support and more on the type of support that should be offered. The general consensus of service providers and the literature reviewed is that projects need to provide holistic support, not tackling individual problems in isolation.

Our version of *holistic* encompasses four key areas:

1. Educating
2. Raising Aspirations
3. Tackling Discrimination
4. Building Networks

These four areas look at tackling many of the issues within the purview of the third sector to take on. That is to say, there are of course a plethora of factors which compound the ability of people from minority communities to enter the labour force, however, many of these issues are not within the scope of an employability project to change, e.g. housing, access to education, attainment in school, etc.

We recognise that it is extremely unlikely that any one organisation could deliver the type of provisions we recommend on their own, and for that reason underpinning the entirety of the recommendations in this section is the need to **build effective partnerships** and **integrate employability services**.

It is important to define what is meant by ‘integration of services’ in this context. This should not be read as meaning that all services should be brought together under one roof. By integration of services, we mean that effective partnerships should be developed. An inter-organisational referral system should be developed to make sure that clients access the support that will best assist them, irrespective of who provides it.

Local providers need support to integrate their services so as to maximise the resources available to each project’s clients. Often due to the under-resourcing of these organisations, any diversion away from front-line services is seen as a non-priority and therefore developing the partnerships necessary to integrate, and even allocating time to investigate who and what is available, is deemed an unaffordable luxury.

The appropriation of time and resources for this end is necessary because the sector is in a constant state of flux. There are some very localised providers and some which are more region-wide. This means that some individuals have greater access than others to support. Furthermore, given the geography of Forth Valley, the ability to maintain accurate knowledge of local support is vital to avoiding indirectly discriminating against those living in rural communities.

Integrating employability support organisations allows for not only the maximising of the types of provisions available but also the quality of those provisions.

Organisations can begin to focus on certain aspects of support which allows them to gain experience and therefore expertise in that field.

The range of support provisions described in this report are not feasibly deliverable by any one organisation, and so partnership, integration and communication are fundamental to improving the employability of Forth Valley's population in all communities.

## **4.1 Raising Aspirations**

Raising aspirations is integral to all interventions. It is something that normally delivers added value to a means to another end. That is to say, raising aspirations is an intended outcome of all interventions, however, not necessarily the sole focus thereof.

The focus groups highlighted the need to tackle people's aspirations. One of the primary barriers to people pursuing new opportunities was the lack of confidence in their English-language ability. The survey asked the question, 'do you think you could change your job/find a new job easily?' 79% answered no, and when encouraged to explain their answer, 95 people did so and 80% of them (76 people) alluded to their English-language abilities being the principal reason. This contradicts both their tutor's interpretation of their abilities and the requirements of the roles they would be applying for.

### ***4.1.1 Building Confidence in Foreign Qualifications***

The *National Academic Recognition Information Centre* (NARIC) is a National Agency managed on behalf of the UK Government (the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills) by ECCTIS. It is mandated by the European Commission as part of the Erasmus/Socrates programme to facilitate the movement of students and workers across Europe by attempting to compare foreign qualifications with domestic frameworks. The organisation is used by Higher Education Institutions and some major employers to assess what a foreign qualification actually means.

Providing access to this service can make a valuable contribution to increasing people's confidence in having their skills and qualifications recognised by a prospective employer. This encourages people to apply for roles that perhaps before they thought were not realistic options for them. Forth Valley College can provide this service for free for registered students.

In our focus groups some, though not many, people had used NARIC. This service was not universally rated by those who had used it. Those who had positive experiences were able to use their certificate of comparison to get better jobs. However, the overall perception was that NARIC tends to downgrade foreign qualifications and more often than not, smaller employers do not recognise the qualifications even after NARIC's intervention.

Nonetheless, it was felt both by those who had and had not used the service that having the certificate of comparison, particularly in certain fields, could raise the

individual's confidence and aspirations when it comes to applying for roles more suited to their skill sets.

#### ***4.1.2 Increasing Job Awareness***

Raising aspirations should not be confused with supporting individuals in pursuing unrealistic goals; there is a delicate balance to be found and sometimes managing those aspirations is necessary.

It is important to be honest with clients as to what they can expect given their experience and qualifications. However, and particularly so for younger clients, it is important to be constructive about aspirations: a goal may be unobtainable at the initial point of contact but that does not necessarily put it beyond reach in the future.

This is where increasing job awareness plays its part: providing 'career pathways' which assist clients in planning for their careers through showing them the steps to be taken to obtain the skills necessary for their desired roles. There is no need for investment in expensive equipment, information available through social media and the internet more generally is enough to ascertain the steps.

It is not recommended that clients are placed in front of a computer and left to their own devices: this should be a guided experience. Using social media sites like LinkedIn, it is possible to show the clients how other people doing the jobs to which they aspire arrived at their position. It can show clients the 'career pathway' people have taken and give them an idea of what skills, education and experience the role requires. Importantly, it provides various paths through seeing how different individuals managed to get the job.

Raising job awareness in such a way allows the project to emphasise the transferrable skills that clients themselves have and can help them to learn how to better present them. This guided experience encourages job-seeking activities in the client and puts the onus of career success on the client rather than the service. It helps equip the client with practical skills that can be applied to future job-seeking/career progression, and leads to more sustainable employment.

Increasing job awareness and managing aspirations should not be seen as convincing the client to accept jobs they do not want; it should be seen as a means of empowering and equipping the client with the necessary skills to plan for and sustain their careers.

#### **4.2 Educating**

In this context, education should be understood in very broad terms, ranging from up-skilling initiatives and retraining, to enhancing soft-skills and knowledge of employment rights in the UK. Moreover, education initiatives should not be limited to jobseekers but also be considered for employers.

Education initiatives are vital to the ability of individuals to overcome many of the barriers they may face in the job-seeking process and, in and of itself, can contribute significantly to raising an individual's aspirations and confidence.

Within Forth Valley there are several organisations working towards improving jobseekers' access to education to increase their employability:

- the Salvation Army's *New Future Project*
- Skills Development Scotland
- Forth Valley College
- Local Council Adult Education Departments, in particular their ESOL courses
- the Stirling School of English
- and, at a different level, the University of Stirling.

#### ***4.2.1 English as a Foreign Language***

For those whose native language is not English, English as a Foreign Language (EFL<sup>32</sup>) courses are one of the most important interventions to be made and directly address "the single most important factor in affecting the likelihood of getting work"<sup>33</sup> for people from minority communities. Projects can look into providing EFL courses themselves or can look to partnering with local EFL providers to support their clients.

There are several organisations providing EFL tuition across Forth Valley and depending on a client's language level and geographical location some are more appropriate than others.

The Stirling School of English charges a small 'registration fee' of £50 per semester and delivers courses to all levels. It runs its classes in the Rock Centre in Stirling through the day and at Wallace High School in the evening. It accepts anybody into its courses and is not limited to residents of Stirling Council area, however, the learners need to be able to make their own way to the classes.

The local councils all provide EFL tuition at a variety of levels for free. This is often limited to one two-hour class per week. The council tuition is strongly linked with the college's and often learners with lower levels of English begin in the council classes and as they develop, transition into the college courses. Only residents of the council areas are eligible to access the classes, i.e. Stirling Council residents have to attend Stirling Council's lessons, not Falkirk's. .

Forth Valley College offers more formal EFL courses. Often these are accredited, examined courses and as a result make a significant contribution towards people's ability to access further education courses at the college itself or other higher education institutions. However, it is important to note that not all clients will be comfortable with the more formalised nature of the college's courses. There is a charge for the courses; however, there is financial support available for those who are eligible, ranging from ILAs to fee-waivers for those on benefits and tax credits.

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<sup>32</sup> Please note, there are a number of acronyms which describe English Language Lessons: EFL, ESOL.

<sup>33</sup> Glasgow Works, pp. 66

Courses are taught in its Alloa, Falkirk, and Stirling campuses allowing for easier access for learners. It also provides classes in the evening and through the day.

#### ***4.2.2 Employability Training Courses***

Training courses are a means of facilitating up-skilling which is not only a means of entering into work but progressing therein. The organisation mentioned previously all offer these types of training courses across Forth Valley.

The *New Future Project* is a Salvation Army initiative operating on the High Street in Falkirk. It is an SQA approved training centre, offering training courses in several core areas such as Food Hygiene, Customer Service, Safe Manual Handling, and the CSCS in Construction.

The project can also deliver bespoke training courses depending on the number of people in need of it. Roughly twelve learners would be required to run a course as this allows the project to cover its costs.

New Future is based in Falkirk but covers the whole of Forth Valley and is able to travel and deliver course where the clients are based, provided there is enough demand to fill a course.

Forth Valley College offers two types of support that might be of interest to clients: formal taught courses through the day, and flexible learning courses. Depending on the needs and commitments of the clients, one may be more appropriate than the other. The formal courses can offer faster routes to vocational training but will require more of the client's time through the day, making work at the same time more difficult. Flexible learning allows the learner the ability to gain qualifications at their own rate, fitting learning around their other commitments. These qualifications can range from vocational training, to short courses in IT skills, etc.

#### ***4.2.3 Soft Skills and Job-seeking Skills***

Job-seeking skills are core to any project's ability to deliver its outcome, they include: CV writing support; interview skills; soft skills, and work readiness courses. While important, these courses are ubiquitous in employability services in Forth Valley: Jobcentres, New Future, EFL courses, Ace Cornton, Forth Valley Migrant Support Network, and Stirling Citizens Advice Bureaux all offer these services.

There is not a great need to replicate or duplicate these services locally. While it is important to have a working knowledge of these skills in order to assist clients, it may be better to utilise the skills and expertise of other providers to deliver more intensive support in these areas.

As already stated, the uptake of these services among minority communities is low. And so there is a need for a project to sign-post its clients to these services and that is what partnership working should aim to achieve. Support could be offered to other

service providers to enhance their knowledge of the needs of minority clients, enhancing their ability to effectively support minority clients.

#### ***4.2.4 Financial Literacy***

Financial literacy courses are an important aspect of employability support but not traditionally considered as such. There are a number of forms provisions can take in order to enhance people financial literacy and it is not limited to helping people manage their money better.

Helping people understand what deductions can and cannot be made from their pay is important in equipping them with the knowledge to question their employers if there are unusual deductions, but also understand their tax codes and pursue rebates if they are being over-charged by HMRC. It is also important to help people understand the differences between National Insurance contributions and tax deductions as these payments may be at variance with practices in their country of birth.

Furthermore, helping people understand the financial implications of taking on work and its effect on household income is crucial to helping people remain in employment. Helping people navigate *in-work benefits* such as Working Tax Credits and how to claim them can make a crucial contribution to a person's decision and ability to accept an offer of employment.

Currently, the five Citizens Advice Bureaux in Forth Valley (Alloa, Denny, Falkirk, Grangemouth, and Stirling) are able to provide this assistance, with Stirling CAB offering additional support through their dedicated Money Advice Service, which also helps people open bank accounts and access other services offered by the banks and financial services.

These services are also under-used by minority clients and partnership working should aim to increase foot-fall from minority clients of these services. As with soft-skills enhancement, there is currently no need to replicate these services but rather to link in with the providers and support them in engaging with minority clients.

### **4.3 Tackling Discrimination**

Tackling discrimination is fundamental to the ability of projects to deliver their intended outcomes. While it is true that third sector organisations alone cannot eliminate discrimination, that does not mean that there are not provisions and advice that projects can offer which seek to minimise and/or tackle it.

Linking individuals with organisations that are able to provide advice and, in particular cases, act on the clients behalf is the best means of delivering this service. In Forth Valley, the CABs are the first port-of-call in helping a client assess their options when they encounter discrimination. However, linking in with Trade Unions and Law firms can provide the ability for individuals to act against discrimination.

### ***4.3.1 Raising Awareness of British Working Rights***

Currently, only Forth Valley College offers classes on the Equalities Act 2010 and basic working rights. However, these classes are primarily taught to students in the employability EFL courses and, as the tutors admit, is done very quickly as it is part of a wider curriculum. The results, however, are impressive; of the 161 individuals this research has spoken to, only those attending said courses had any knowledge of the Equalities Act and were the people who were most confident in being able to recognise illegal practices, if still largely unwilling to confront them.

### ***4.3.2 Preparing Clients for the Possibility of Discrimination***

Preparing individuals for the possibility of encountering discrimination in their job-seeking activities, or within the workplace is not the same as accepting discriminatory practices. It is important to make clients aware that discrimination can happen, but this should be paired with informing them of their options to tackle it.

### ***4.3.3 Minority Law Centres***

The Ethnic Minority Law Centre (EMLC) offers specialised legal advice and services to deal with issues predominantly faced by minority communities. These services make it possible for people from minority communities to challenge discrimination, but also access other types of support which may make securing employment possible, e.g. visa application support and representation.

Currently, there are disproportionately fewer cases received by the Employment Tribunals Service for Forth Valley and there is a feeling among partner organisations that, perhaps, this is down to the fact that it is difficult for people to access the legal advice and support in order to challenge cases.

No inhabitants of the Forth Valley are able to access their services. This is due to the fact that local councils have to pay a retainer to the EMLC for their services to be made available in their areas; currently, none of the local councils in Forth Valley provide funding for the retainer.

## **4.4 Building Networks**

It is still largely accepted that networking is a significant factor in securing employment, determining its significance is almost impossible and estimations vary. This reality often leaves those from minority communities at a significant disadvantage as a result of their limited networks. It is important, however, to note that minority communities are not alone in being disadvantaged in this regard.

The provisions described in this section are perhaps the most significant in our proposal and the ones that are most lacking in Forth Valley. They not only tackle

minority communities' limited networks but also seek to act against the 'no experience, no work' cycle in which many of the focus group participants were trapped. This area is where the greatest opportunity for new, third-sector initiatives lie, and where the biggest impact can be made - provided the features elaborated upon previously in the sections 1,2, and 3 of *Part Two* are incorporated into its delivery.

#### **4.4.1 Mentoring Services**

The OECD report highlighted the success organisations offering mentoring services had in transitioning people into work. There are a number of benefits to this both in terms of assisting the client to develop their networks, but also in terms of raising their aspirations.

Mentoring was a popular provision among the survey respondents: 76.4% said they would like to speak to somebody who could share their experience of having navigated the labour market in the UK with them.

Mentoring can be a gentle way of helping the client overcome their own inhibitions with regard to the labour market and act as an effective demonstration that success is achievable. The OECD refers to mentors as 'brokers' as they are called on to utilise their contacts and make connections between them and their mentees, allowing their mentees to 'piggy back on the social capital'<sup>34</sup> of the mentor/broker.

The Scottish Mentoring Network advised that in order to realise this provision, a full-time Mentor Coordinator would be necessary to recruit, support and train mentors and mentees, and crucially pair them with one another.

Mentors would be volunteers and, in this instance, volunteers matching specific criteria in order to be viable candidates, ideally they would be:

- in work, or very recently retired;
- willing to devote two or three hours a week of their time;
- and, available for their mentees beyond their face-to-face meetings.

Further to these criteria, mentors would ideally be engaged in industries and sectors of relevance to their mentees' interests and skill-sets.

The Scottish Mentoring Network put the crux of any mentoring service down to putting in place the proper support for the mentors, which would involve:

- offering one-to-one support meetings with the mentor coordinator on a monthly basis;
- group meetings where mentors could get to know each other, not necessarily in a formal setting but in an environment which fostered a social atmosphere and which allowed mentors to share their experiences;
- and, induction training, explaining what is and what is not expected of mentors, what the boundaries are, etc.

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<sup>34</sup>Froy and Pyne, pp. 40

Furthermore, mentors and mentees would have to be located relatively close to one another in order to make meeting easier and therefore more sustainable. However, this can lead to a *postcode lottery* and lead to some people in some areas being unable to access the service or as good a service for their needs as others receive.

However, the ability to realise the project is contingent upon having access to a pool of potential mentoring candidates that can be tapped into to meet the demand. Our discussions with partners in the area suggested that the recruitment and retention of volunteers is challenging, even for organisations which have always relied on them to deliver their services. Any project looking to implement a mentoring scheme would have to be sure that they would have the appropriate resources in terms of both material and personnel to meet the demand.

Based on our findings, we would suggest that mentoring would be best suited to smaller, localised initiatives concentrated within individual minority groups. This is because of the precarious nature of volunteer recruitment and retention at a pan-Forth Valley level.

Support for establishing such an initiative can be found from the Scottish Mentoring Network, who are able to provide a best practice guide and advice if you subscribe to their network. Clackmannanshire Third Sector Interface, CVS Falkirk and the Stirling Voluntary Enterprise can assist in recruiting volunteer mentors.

Most organisations suggested that often incentives are necessary to attract and retain volunteer mentors. More often than not this takes the form of training and qualifications, however, others have mentioned facilitating networking and socialising among the mentors can also draw people in. Locally, the University of Stirling's training department is able to develop bespoke courses which are accredited by the university. However, the Scottish Mentoring Network is also able to recommend trainers and training course which might be more suitable and more economical.

#### ***4.4.2 Further and Higher Education Networks***

Both the OECD and the Glasgow Works' reports state that networks do not need to be exclusive to employers and to the labour market. It is important to know how to help people access education facilities in order to obtain the training they need to fulfil their aspirations.

Investigating local and national Higher Education Institutions and understanding their application processes, and crucially financial support criteria can be just as important as facilitating work opportunities. There can be a particular need for young people to access this type of support.

We also looked at developing stronger links with EFL providers. We found that 78% of those attending English language lessons learned about them from friends and that the councils in particular, do not actively advertise their services. It is therefore likely that the uptake of these classes is not as high as it could otherwise be. Nonetheless,

despite not advertising the classes, Falkirk Council's EFL classes are already running a waiting list. They are not able to meet the full demand that there is for the service.

#### **4.4.3 Job Fairs**

The Glasgow Works' Toolkit highlighted Job Fairs as being "one of the best ways of engaging people"<sup>35</sup> into the project, citing the fact that less stigma is involved in attending fairs than engaging with traditional employability support, and drawing attention to the clarity of its purpose in attracting employers. There was a great deal of enthusiasm for such events in the focus groups and in discussions with partner organisations.

Those discussions with employers and individuals brought to light that:

- there is a lack of mutual-awareness;
- there is a feeling among minorities that jobs in certain sectors are considered 'not for us';
- some employers have stated that they simply do not know how to reach people from minority communities and would appreciate assistance in this regard.

By bringing together employers and jobseekers from minority communities en masse, the process of facilitating dialogue between the two can be founded.

Public employers are a good place to start when attempting to organise such events. They not only have a duty to promote equality but to foster it. The OECD recommends targeting growth areas within the local economy and engaging employers in those sectors. They are likely to be able to offer more sustainable employment and therefore this avoids the risks which are more prevalent among minority communities of being in more precarious employment<sup>36</sup>.

It is important to bear in mind that often attendees of such events are not looking for contacts, but jobs. It is important to impress upon employers the need to consider what roles they are looking to recruit for and when. In our focus groups, we spoke to individuals who were deeply disillusioned with an employment fair held in the Scottish Parliament targeted at minority communities. This feeling arose as a result of the employers offering low-skilled, insecure employment. The result was a further feeling of estrangement from the employers and the individuals felt demeaned by the event.

Within Forth Valley, in order to make the project as accessible as possible it is important to consider holding the event in each of the council areas, depending on the situation at the time that could be a matter of holding a bi-annual event and alternating between Stirling, Falkirk and Alloa each time.

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<sup>35</sup> Glasgow Works, pp. 59

<sup>36</sup> Froy and Pyne, pp. 40

#### **4.4.4 Work Placements**

Facilitating work placements is recognised as one of the most effective provisions for supporting people into work. It was the single most popular intervention put to the survey respondents, 85% of people answered that they would like to experience a different type of job to their current employment. Most of the focus group participants recognised the opportunity this could provide in terms of overcoming the ‘no experience, no work’ cycle through the ability to demonstrate directly to employers their skills. They also appreciated the value of obtaining a potential reference to enhance their prospects of paid employment elsewhere.

Projects that focus on offering work placements need to find a balance between just organising any work placement and offering work placements that correspond with the client’s experience and aspirations. Ultimately, both are valuable, though arguably the latter is more beneficial, if more challenging. The reality of projects offering work placements will no doubt be a combination of the two. There is a limit to what a project can deliver; this is often dictated by the circumstances of the local economy and the client’s own.

In order to be able to offer and facilitate work placements in general, projects require time. Success is contingent upon building a reputation and rapport with employers and communities. This can be a long process and demands a long investment in order to fully realise the potential of the intervention. The Bridges Programmes has been operating for ten years, and it has been able to build an extensive network of employers. Before the 2013/14 financial year, Bridges already had links with 52 companies, and added a further 37 that year<sup>37</sup>; its clients benefited therefore from the experience and reputation the project was able to build over their ten years. A new project will require time to be able to offer outcomes similar to those of the Bridges Programmes.

The Bridges Programmes in Glasgow aims to provide its beneficiaries with tailored placements. The project works exclusively with clients for whom English is a foreign language. It runs a series of interventions, with work placements being principal among them. Over the 2013/14 year, the project reached 300 people in 525 separate interventions, it facilitated 117 placements. Of the clients with a right to work 44% entered the labour market, with a further 26% entering Further or Higher Education<sup>38</sup>.

In order to be able to offer work placements that are aligned with the client’s skills and aspirations, projects must put in place the correct ethos and staff. By ethos, we mean that projects and staff have to be prepared to exert the energy required to convince employers of the benefits of providing clients with work placements. In order to do this, staff have to have specific skills.

The Bridges team includes an Employer Development Lead and caseworkers. Caseworkers deal directly with the clients to:

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<sup>37</sup> *ibid*

<sup>38</sup> *The Bridges Programmes Annual Review: 2013-2014*, pp. 5

<[http://www.bridgesprogrammes.org.uk/files/Annual\\_Report\\_2013\\_2014.pdf](http://www.bridgesprogrammes.org.uk/files/Annual_Report_2013_2014.pdf)>

- assess the client's needs and ensure that they access the appropriate support
- help them ready their CVs and enhance their interview skills
- prepare the client for working in Scotland
- manage the client's aspirations with the realities of what can be offered

The case-worker gathers all this information and passes it on to the Employer Development Lead who then goes out and tries to secure a suitable work placement.

The Employer Development Lead is a former recruitment consultant experienced in sales, who is responsible for approaching employers to secure placements. Having experience in the sector of recruitment and sales is seen as being invaluable to the project's ability to connect employers and clients. The person has to be able to sell the client to an employer, it is not a given that the employer will say *yes*. Furthermore, they should also know how to navigate the corporate world in order to make sure the person to whom they are selling the client has the authority to offer a placement.

It is not simply a matter of phoning a company and asking politely. It requires tact, perseverance and the ability to pursue what will often seem a hopeless cause. The Managing Director of Bridges explained that for every company that offers a work placement, twenty others were asked. Knowing where to look, whom to contact and how to sell can make the difference between success and failure.

Work placements also present an opportunity for projects to indirectly offer mentoring support by encouraging the employers to provide that advice and guidance to the clients. This may be an attractive option to organisations that may not have the direct links to people in the communities and provides the support for the client without the risks of running the precarious mentoring service itself. Bridges incorporates mentoring into its work placements and sees it as a successful compromise.

Locally, the Aspire Project, run by Stirling Council, had built relationships with local employers and was able to facilitate a number of work placements for individuals in some local businesses, particularly in care homes. This project achieved successful results for its beneficiaries, and high satisfaction levels among them. At the time of writing this report, it is understood that Aspire is no longer able to provide this level of support locally due to funding cuts, however, the project is still offering its Work Club support.

## Conclusion

Our research has established that Forth Valley's minority ethnic, national and cultural communities face significant inequalities in relation to employment and economic status. While the extent to which communities face those inequalities differs, universally, minority ethnic communities experience higher rates of unemployment and economic inactivity than White communities.

As minority communities begin to play an increasingly more important role in the economic future of Forth Valley, there is a clear need to address the barriers that impede people from minority communities from fully seizing the employment opportunities the area offers.

We set out in this document a strategy for supporting and empowering people from minority backgrounds to overcome the challenges they face through establishing a series of interventions that are: **appealing** to clients, employers and partner organisations; **accessible** to as wide a range of people from across Forth Valley; **meaningful** in their intentions and provisions, looking to empower the individual and ready to respond to the needs of individual clients; and finally, **holistic** in their scope, ensuring as broad a spectrum of support as the barriers that they seek to confront.

We stress the dependency of this strategy on the pressing need to develop an integrated network of employability service providers in Forth Valley so that individual clients are helped by those best placed to support them and their particular needs.

Likewise, we emphasise the need to develop a project that from its inception is client-focused and thus, avoids the danger of prioritising the process of support over the client's needs. The ethos of the project is, arguably, as important as the interventions it offers: projects have to be rooted in the need to respond to existential problems, that is to say problems that are known by experience rather than reason. Projects must incorporate a degree of flexibility and adaptability so as to remain relevant to the changing conditions in the wider economy and society.

The local people we have engaged with throughout our research have informed the design and development of the strategy at all stages of the process. They have appealed for help and have expressed their desire to engage with a project such as the one herein described. Forth Valley is well placed to deliver the support we have recommended and it is in its interests to see that minority communities have the equality of opportunity to prosper in the local area as much as any other community.

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## **Appendix 1: Bibliography**

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## **Appendix 2: Glossary**

- **EFL** – English as a Foreign Language
- **EMLC** – the Ethnic Minority Law Centre
- **FOI** – Freedom of Information
- **HEI** – Higher Education Institution
- **ILA** – Individual Learning Account
- **OECD** – Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development
- **SDS** – Skills Development Scotland

## **Appendix 3: Population Raw Data**