

Supplementary written evidence submitted by the Department for Work and Pensions (MIE0036)

Further to the recent Select Committee Inquiry, I am writing to the Committee to highlight the various areas of the Department of and Work Pensions engagement in the area Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) employment.

As I made clear at the Inquiry and as I am sure you will know as a former Minister in the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), this Government and the Department has committed to increase the employment of Black and Minority Ethnic groups by 20 per cent by 2020, including specific support offered to Muslim women.

There are a number of current Jobcentre Plus (JCP) programmes which are working towards achieving this aim. Our work coaches are already offering claimants a comprehensive menu of support options including Work Experience; New Enterprise Allowance; Sector Based Work Academies; Work Clubs; Work Together; and Enterprise Clubs, as well as provision funded through the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Flexible Support Fund (FSF). These measures have helped increase BME employment by 768,000 since 2010. There are also now 340,000 Muslim women in employment, compared to 234,000 in 2011 – an increase of 45 per cent.

To support people to move into work, it is essential that work always pays, and Universal Credit will help achieve this. Universal Credit provides financial incentives making work pay more than a life on benefits, and personalised support through a dedicated work coach to help tackle barriers to moving into work and progressing in work. We estimate that this will boost employment by up to 250,000 in steady state and our analysis suggests that this will include a significant number of people from BME groups.

We recognise that for some Muslim groups, lack of English can be a significant barrier to finding work. The government supports claimants to improve their language skills, covering the full cost of English language for those who have been in the UK for at least three years, are in receipt of work-related benefits and who need to improve their English in order to find work. All new claimants of Jobseeker's Allowance and Universal Credit (in the all work-related requirements group), with spoken English below that of a 7-9 year old are referred on a mandatory basis by Jobcentre Plus for English Language Training, as a condition for receiving their benefits.

Childcare is a particularly important tool to support those with children, including Muslim women, into work because it allows them to take up employment whilst their child is being cared for. To support them, this government is doubling the current 15 hours of free childcare to all children aged 3 and 4 to 30 hours for working parents. We are also introducing more generous support for parents on Universal Credit, who are now able to claim up to 85% of childcare costs for children up to the age of 16 (17 if disabled). We are also introducing Tax-free Childcare for working parents next year and offer 15 hours of free childcare for 40 per cent of the most disadvantaged 2 year olds.

In addition, the Department provides a range of co-location and outreach services. Committee member Jess Phillips MP will be particularly aware of co-located services in her constituency, including Job Clubs every week to assist with job search, Beta Pathways which offers Employment Support and Work Experience, and an Adult Education Centre that offers Careers Advice & Skills Training. There are also Centres for the Community held at The Vibe and Oasis Academy and the Government is currently looking at the development of further co-located services across the country.

We have also identified Jobcentre Plus areas which seem to be particularly successful in supporting their local BME communities to move off of Jobseeker's Allowance. We are working with these areas to identify good practice which we will share across the Jobcentre Plus network.

The Government is making progress in improving Muslim employment. There are now over 1 million Muslims in employment, compared to 800,000 in 2011. I have provided further detail about this at *Annex A*.

We are currently reviewing our engagement with stakeholders. The existing Ethnic Minority Employment Stakeholder Group has focused on DWP business, which no longer seems appropriate given the cross government nature of the work being taken forward. We are in discussion with stakeholders to explore possibilities for improving engagement and more effectively supporting this agenda going forward.

You asked me to provide four specific pieces of information, which I have done so below.

Can you set out how you respond to criticism that the 2020 targets can be achieved just through anticipated growth in the working age population?

This government has set an ambitious goal of reaching full employment. This means that we are committed to fulfilling the potential of everyone in our society who can, to gain the benefits of employment.

We have set ourselves an ambitious goal for BME groups. Demographic change will doubtless have some impact on the target, however, success in meeting it will likely require far more than this.

There is a role for government to ensure that all its policies are aligned; to help remove discrimination and breakdown prejudices; to provide support that is tailored to the needs of individuals; and there is a role for employers to ensure that they are recruiting a diverse workforce that reflects the communities in

which they are based. I have set out the actions we are taking to increase BME employment previously in this letter.

Why is the target numerical rather than expressed as employment or unemployment rates?

The BME employment target is expressed as an increase in the employment of people from a BME background by 20 per cent by 2020. This can easily be translated into a number of additional people who will need to be moved into employment and allows a measure of progress against a baseline.

A target based on the employment or unemployment rate would not solely be dependent on the number of people moving into employment but would also be highly dependent on changes to the BME population. This increases uncertainty about the numbers required to move into work to meet the target and would make it more difficult to monitor the government's progress to meet the target.

The Minister mentioned projects focused on improving employment rates for Muslims. Can you provide more information on the projects, including material on evaluations that have been carried out and how outcomes from these projects compare with Jobcentre Plus projects and the Work Programme?

Jobcentre Plus works in communities, developing services which are tailored to the local community. As such, these initiatives are not formally evaluated and are not comparable with national activities such as the Work Programme.

As I mentioned at the Inquiry, there are a multitude of initiatives working with BME groups and Muslim women in particular. I have attached a number of detailed examples from London, East of England, West of England, West Midlands and Yorkshire helping Muslims into employment at *Annex B*. This includes working with the local community, voluntary and community sector organisations, and public and private sector partners as well as running workshops teaching sewing, English, Maths and IT held in children's centres with crèche facilities. We also offer support to write a business plan to set up small business, one-to-one help in CV writing and work coach support, job application and interview preparation, support for confidence building, skills training, work experience, and free training and workshops on topics such as money management.

What data is available about the effectiveness of Jobcentre Plus and Work Programme outcomes based on ethnicity and faith?

The Work Programme is succeeding – transforming the lives of those furthest from the labour market and getting people into sustained jobs. Its innovative payment by results system means a good deal for taxpayers. Through the Work Programme, for BME groups (shown in the table below as Asian or Asian British, Black or Black British and Chinese or other ethnic group) there were in total 266,300 referrals, 261,290 attachments, 77,280 Job Outcome payments and at least 76,180 individuals who achieved at least one Sustainment payment. Please see the table overleaf for full details.

The latest Work Programme National Statistics on people joining and those gaining sustained employment up to 31st December 2015 were published in 17 March 2016: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/work-programme-data-to-december-2015>

	Referrals	Attachments	Job Outcome payments	No. who achieved at least one Sustainment payment
	<i>in thousands</i>			
All	1810.00	1776.60	503.16	492.73
White	1421.20	1395.78	391.96	383.30
Mixed	35.49	34.57	10.07	9.84
Asian or Asian British	99.44	97.78	28.89	28.58
Black or Black British	123.31	120.82	36.29	35.72
Chinese or Other Ethnic Group	43.55	42.69	12.10	11.88
Prefer Not to Say	82.99	81.48	23.59	23.22
Unknown	4.02	3.48	0.25	0.19

There has also been a participant experience report published as a part of the Work Programme evaluation: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/work-programme-evaluation-participant-experience>

We are currently carrying out a piece of work to understand which JCP districts are most successful at moving BME claimants off JSA and into employment. We have chosen to measure this by comparing the gap between JSA off-flow rates within 12 months for White claimants and BME claimants. Analysts tracked JSA claims that began between 1st August 2013 and 31st July 2014. At a national level we find that the off-flow rate for white JSA claimants is 93% and for BME JSA claimants it is 91%.

I hope this fully answers your questions.

Annex A: Activity rates for Muslims, aged 16-64, 2011-2015

There are now over 1 million Muslims in employment, compared to 800,000 in 2011.

For Muslim women, the inactivity rate has fallen from 64 per cent to 58 per cent since 2011. There are now 340,000 Muslim women in employment, compared to 234,000 in 2011 – an increase of 45 per cent. The unemployment rate has decreased from 23 per cent to 16 per cent over 5 years.

For Muslim men, the unemployment rate has fallen from 15 per cent to 11 per cent since 2011. The employment rate has increased from 64 per cent to 67 per cent. There are now 19 per cent more Muslim men in employment than in 2011.

All Muslims	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Employed %	46.5	47.2	47.6	50.3	51.4
Unemployed %	17.2	17.1	17.8	13.9	12.8
Inactive %	43.9	43	42.1	41.6	41

Men	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Employed %	63.9	64.7	64	65.7	67.4
Unemployed %	14.7	14.3	14.9	12.3	11
Inactive %	25.1	24.4	24.8	25.1	24.3

Women	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Employed %	27.9	29.1	30.7	33.6	34.9
Unemployed %	22.8	22.9	23.3	17.1	16.1
Inactive %	63.9	62.2	60	59.5	58.4

Note: This data was taken from the Office for National Statistics' Annual Population Survey (APS) from January – December 2015.

Annex B: Jobcentre projects and partner initiatives

Bradford

The Social justice Team (SJT) works with claimants who are experiencing multiple barriers and we have specific partnerships with, and support in co-location, Women Zone and Bradford Women's aid. Both support Muslim women, the latter organisation, in particular, works with those affected by domestic abuse. A Community Work Coach from the SJT has worked with a number of women there and successfully supported them into work. In one case a mother who had been abused for a number of years, had language barriers and was fighting for access to her child, was successfully supported to write a business plan and set up her own small business as a seamstress.

Families First is the Troubled Families programme in Bradford, which has been successful in supporting a number of families, from the Muslim Community, into work. One example is of a lone parent, with 4 children, who had not worked since 2000 and had very limited work history. She had experienced domestic violence and had on-going mental health problems, totally lacked in self-confidence and distrusted all males. Despite this, the Community Work Coach managed to build up trust and develop rapport, and help her overcome her anxieties. He identified that she was a very good sewing machinist and by enabling the purchase of an industrial sewing machine, through FSF, she was able to become self-employed. She is still in work. Another woman, who was also a lone parent and the subject of domestic violence, with no work experience, a lack of English and was claiming Employment and Support Allowance, was referred for support from Sharing Voices, and was subsequently supported into becoming a sewing machinist by a Troubled Families Employment Adviser.

Peterborough

In June 2015, Peterborough Jobcentre introduced a job club aimed primarily at up to 60 women from the Asian community. Working with a community college and existing provider, they offered a variety of support within the community and arranged to deliver support clubs in four children's centres across the city.

After an initial assessment of each participant's skills and work related barriers, they are placed on a six week programme of workshops. The workshops run for two hours each week teaching sewing, English, Maths and IT. Having the workshops in children's centres is a great help to participants who can bring their young children to use the crèche facilities. Participants are encouraged to build friendships with other parents and make use of the additional support offered by the centres. The promise of in-work support once participants have found work has made the initiative particularly attractive.

The job clubs have been a great success, with five participants already securing employment and a further 18 undertaking a range of training and voluntary work.

Raising Aspirations, Tower Hamlets

Raising Aspirations is a local initiative that brings together a range of partners, including Jobcentre Plus, to draw on available funding streams and shared expertise to deliver a holistic programme to address resident's barriers to employment. It engages local unemployed residents with multiple barriers to employment and effectively joins up support services, including skills and provision to increase outcomes into employment.

The delivery model is built around the needs of the service user, using a key worker approach to build trust and to provide intensive one-to-one support to meet the needs of participants. For example in one case, a 27 year-old Muslim mother of 4, who was a lone parent, was helped by being referred to an ESOL programme to improve her language skills, confidence and self-esteem. She was also referred to Money Management advice services and the team worked with Local Authority Landlord (LA) and Registered Social Landlord (RSL) colleagues for support with housing issues they had identified. Raising Aspirations also helped her to produce an up-to-date CV and gave careers advice, provided one-to-one mentoring, supported her with job-search and developing job search techniques, provided extensive one-to-one support with job applications and interview techniques and supported her to secure a place on an IT course.

Harlesden

Harlesden Jobcentre staff actively worked with the local community, voluntary and community sector organisations, and public and private sector partners to understand – from residents – the issues and needs of service users, and involve local communities in the design and delivery of local services. This innovative community/customer-led approach has resulted in actions to address the needs of BME groups, notably the Somali community which makes up the largest percentage population of any BME group locally.

Harlesden Jobcentre staff held meetings and hosted open discussions with the community and partners. By working collaboratively they identified communication as a primary concern and developed solutions. This included delivery of outreach activities and introduction of a Community Desk in the Jobcentre, staffed by a local community group, providing an interface between local people with language barriers and Jobcentre staff.

Outcomes have included: breaking down communication barriers; building trust; better signposting, encouraging take up of services both in the Jobcentre and in the community; improved understanding of community issues, and raised awareness of the Jobcentre offer, collectively helping to level the playing field for a disadvantaged claimant group. The approach contributed to a 15% reduction in Harlesden's claimant count over a twelve month period.

Harlesden has applied this collaborative method of working to target other entrenched barriers to work, e.g. ex-offending, drug and alcohol addiction, and gang membership, and has won the 2014 DWP Compact Award, which celebrates partnership working.

A'Aina Centre, Walsall

A'Aina are a company that support only women with the vast majority coming from a Muslim and BME background. A'Aina provide employment and life skills courses ranging from cookery, ESOL and incorporating employment courses as needed. They attend JCP's in Walsall regularly to floor walk and support claimants that are in need of further help. There are ongoing work experience placements for Admin and Cleaning roles with A'Aina and again these are ring-fenced for women from BME backgrounds due to the nature of the support A'Aina offer.

PATH Yorkshire, Leeds

PATH Yorkshire was established as a Positive Action Training organisation to address the under-representation of people from BME communities in employment. PATH provision is available predominantly, but not exclusively, for BME claimants. PATH successfully delivers a range of programmes across Leeds and has fostered a close working relationship with Jobcentre colleagues, regularly attending Jobcentres to generate referrals for their programmes and offering work experience and employment opportunities.

They offer tailored support for different age groups, such as English classes, visits to employers, cultural visits and social events for 16 year olds and over, one-to-one help in CV writing, job application and interview preparation, support for work experience, free training and workshops for 18 to 24 year olds and one-to-one work coach support, confidence building, skills training, money management, and personal development workshops including business start-up support for 25 year olds and over.

PATH has also recently introduced a new programme called 'Second Chance', to support those in-work on low incomes or zero hours contracts to find better employment opportunities. 'Second Chance' is directly linked to Universal Credit and aims to improve participants' quality of life and reduce benefit dependency.

Since October 2014, some 39 claimants who have taken part in the PATH programmes have found work, proving the value of this local partnership initiative.

Dynamite 50, Avon, Severn & Thames

Between April and July 2015, the Avon, Severn and Thames district Business Development and Partnership team worked with Ashley Community Housing to deliver a pilot project aimed at reducing unemployment rates for the BME communities in the West of England. The pilot focussed particularly on reaching the Somali community with its mix of clans, social backgrounds and high proportion of skilled professionals who had not been able to secure work in their field.

Dynamite 50 was designed to deliver wrap-around provision to 40 claimants with a real focus on raising confidence, breaking down language barriers and addressing a lack of UK employment history, work experience and qualifications. Each claimant was given a personal diagnostic interview to identify their barriers to employment. Then, an individual package of support was put in place to help the claimant become more 'job ready.' Support ranged from addressing childcare issues, improving English and interpersonal skills and understanding the transport system to help individuals to travel to work independently. Another key element involved preparing claimants to access employment opportunities by themselves, including preparing CVs and completing application forms.

The pilot was a great success with 13 participants securing employment. Others continue to receive help to improve their English and to access valuable work experience opportunities.