

First Report of Session 2012–2013

# All Party Parliamentary Group on Race and Community

Ethnic Minority Female Unemployment:  
Black, Pakistani and Bangladeshi Heritage Women

# About the All Party Parliamentary Group on Race and Community

The All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Race and Community is a cross party group of MPs and peers which focuses on issues of racial justice. The group aims to increase the coverage in parliament of issues relating to race and ethnicity; to update members on these issues as well as on up-to-date research; and to connect the group with charities and other organisations working on these issues around the country.

The group's chair is David Lammy MP, and secretariat support is provided by the Runnymede Trust. This is the group's first inquiry and report.

## APPG Inquiry Sub-committee:

Chair: David Lammy MP  
Debbie Abrahams MP  
Baroness Berridge  
Baroness Hussein-Ece  
Baroness Floella Benjamin

## About the Runnymede Trust

The Runnymede Trust is the UK's leading race equality think tank. It works to identify barriers to race equality and good race relations; enable effective action for social change and influence policy at all levels through providing thought leadership and robust evidence.

The Runnymede Trust has provided secretariat support for the APPG since 2010. This report has been written by the Runnymede Trust's Public Affairs Manager **Vicki Butler** on behalf of and in partnership with the APPG inquiry sub-committee.

## APPG on Race and Community, c/o The Runnymede Trust

7 Plough Yard, London, EC2A 3LP  
T 020 7377 9222  
E [info@runnymedetrust.org](mailto:info@runnymedetrust.org)

[www.runnymedetrust.org](http://www.runnymedetrust.org)

## Disclaimer

The facts presented and views expressed in this publication are those of the APPG sub-committee and not necessarily those of other members of the APPG on Race and Community, the political parties of the members of the sub-committee, the Runnymede Trust, or the Runnymede Trust's funders.

## Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, whose support of the Runnymede Trust's parliamentary work has allowed the organisation to co-ordinate the work of the APPG and this inquiry.

We would also like to thank all of those who submitted written and oral evidence to this inquiry, including those women who took part in the inquiry focus groups. Finally, we would like to thank Oxfam, the Women's Resource Centre and the Equality and Diversity Forum for their advice and assistance at various points of the inquiry.

ISBN: 978-1-906732-96-7

**Published by Runnymede in November 2012, this document is © Runnymede.**

## Open access. Some rights reserved.

The Runnymede Trust wants to encourage the circulation of its work as widely as possible while retaining the copyright. The trust has an open access policy which enables anyone to access its content online without charge. Anyone can download, save, perform or distribute this work in any format, including translation, without written permission. This is subject to the terms of the Creative Commons Licence Deed: Attribution-Non-Commercial-No Derivative Works 2.0 UK: England & Wales. Its main conditions are:

- You are free to copy, distribute, display and perform the work;
- You must give the original author credit;
- You may not use this work for commercial purposes;
- You may not alter, transform, or build upon this work.

You are welcome to ask Runnymede for permission to use this work for purposes other than those covered by the licence. Runnymede is grateful to Creative Commons for its work and its approach to copyright. For more information please go to [www.creativecommons.org](http://www.creativecommons.org)



# Contents

Executive Summary	4
Recommendations	5
1. Introduction	6
2. Background to Ethnic Minority Female Unemployment in the UK	7
3. Impact of the Current Recession	9
4. Reasons Behind Ethnic Minority Female Unemployment	11
5. Inactivity Rates	17
6. Effectiveness of the Current Government Policies	19
7. Impact on Families	24
8. Conclusions	25
9. References	26
10. Evidence Submitted	26

## Executive Summary

The All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Race and Community's inquiry into ethnic minority female unemployment took place between July and November 2012. Evidence was collected in parliamentary oral evidence sessions, in local focus groups and through written submissions from a range of organisations and individuals. This executive summary provides an outline of key findings from the inquiry, with detailed analysis available in the main report, starting on page 6. This report reflects the views of the APPG inquiry sub-committee and not the whole APPG.

The inquiry found that the unemployment rates of Black, Pakistani and Bangladeshi heritage women have remained consistently higher than those of white women since the early 1980s. Indeed, despite the more frequent attention given to the unemployment rates of ethnic minority men, the overall unemployment rate of ethnic minority women is actually higher, 14.3% compared to 13.2%. When looking at the groups which are the focus of this inquiry – Black, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women – these women are far more likely to be unemployed than both white men and white women. Pakistani and Bangladeshi women are particularly affected, with 20.5% being unemployed compared to 6.8% of white women, with 17.7% of Black women also being unemployed.

The APPG sub-committee was concerned prior to the inquiry that Black, Pakistani and Bangladeshi female unemployment rates were more likely to be impacted upon by public sector reform in the current recession due to their concentration in the public sector work force. However, following the inquiry it was unfortunately not possible to confirm whether this has actually been the case due to the lack of availability of up-to-date data from employers.

The inquiry uncovered a number of barriers to Black, Pakistani and Bangladeshi employment. Discrimination was found to be present at every stage of the recruitment process – when assessing applications, during interviews, at recruitment agencies and also in the workplace itself. Strikingly, it was estimated by Professors Anthony Heath and Yaojun Li that 25% of the ethnic minority unemployment rate for both men and women could be explained by prejudice and racial discrimination. Discrimination based on name and accent was also uncovered both in data received and from personal testimony.

In addition, it was found that discrimination based on both gender and ethnicity is taking place in job interviews. Muslim women who wear the hijab reported discrimination and women of all three ethnic groups reported questions asked about intentions regarding marriage and children. This was often tied to assumptions based on ethnicity – for example it was assumed that Muslim women would want to stop work after having children.

Other issues identified as barriers to employment include language issues, cultural attitudes towards women, qualifications and lack of social capital. In particular, childcare was identified as a problem, with Pakistani and Bangladeshi women being less likely to take up free childcare places. There was also evidence of demand for more culturally sensitive services.

Inactivity rates of Pakistani and Bangladeshi heritage women have long been known to be high, and early analysis carried out in evidence submitted to this report found that inactivity rates of Somali heritage women are even higher. We found that inactivity rates could be high partly because some women may be giving up searching for work due to difficulties in finding employment and the decreased confidence this brings. Furthermore, the inquiry also found that consistent workplace inactivity of younger women could lead to difficulties in finding a job in later life.

Current government policies were analysed by the APPG sub-committee, which was keen to determine whether the Government's approach of looking at the individual needs of job seekers, regardless of ethnicity, was working in relation to reducing ethnic minority female unemployment. It was found that minority ethnic groups are less likely than white groups to find Job Centre Plus helpful, with women interviewed stating that there is a lack of adequate support for, and cultural understanding of, the needs of Pakistani and Bangladeshi women.

The inquiry also found that there is an appetite for more support to set up businesses from Black women, particularly for newly unemployed professionals over the age of 25. This would not only help reduce ethnic minority female unemployment – small business growth is considered essential to the recovery of the wider economy.

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) provision has been identified as a key solution to

barriers in employment, but it was also found that some women are put off of these classes due to a preference for women-only classes and familiar community venues, as well as class times which do not clash with the school run.

On apprenticeships, the National Apprenticeship Service's (NAS) efforts to increase the numbers of ethnic minority apprentices through its diversity pilots and other work is welcomed. However, the APPG sub-committee is concerned that progress is not happening quickly enough to help reduce the high rates of ethnic minority youth unemployment, and that the aims are not set high enough in relation to increasing the numbers of ethnic minorities on apprenticeships.

Throughout the report and inquiry it was found that service providers, employers and the Government frequently dealt with women and ethnic minorities as separate entities and undertook little work or data monitoring on these two characteristics combined. This report shows that ethnic minority women – and in particular Black, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women – have specific needs and a specific experience of the labour market and unemployment. If the unacceptably high levels of unemployment of these women are to be solved, politicians, policy makers and employers need to recognise this.

## Recommendations

**Recommendation 1:** Better information on ethnic minority female unemployment is needed. A government department or non-departmental public body should collect this data and consider publishing a regular report on public sector redundancies broken down by ethnicity.

**Recommendation 2:** There is a lack of clarity around whether the public sector needs to monitor job losses by ethnicity. This needs to be clarified and communicated to employers.

**Recommendation 3:** Monitoring redundancies by ethnicity, as well as gender and ethnicity combined, should be held up as best practice for employers. The Government should encourage this as part of its Social Mobility Compact with business and in procurement.

**Recommendation 4:** Organisations such as the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC), the Government Equalities Office (GEO) and charities should explore ways of capturing

employment data on dual characteristics which do not create an excessive burden for businesses.

**Recommendation 5:** The Government should publish an action plan to increase take-up of blank name application forms, with the Government leading the way by piloting its use in at least one of its departments.

**Recommendation 6:** Professional associations should provide improved guidance offering greater clarity regarding the equivalency between UK and overseas qualifications and experience of employment.

**Recommendation 7:** Recruitment agencies are important players in access to employment and should be better engaged with these issues. They should therefore work closely with their staff to help reduce unconscious bias and to help them engage effectively with ethnic minority candidates.

**Recommendation 8:** As part of the changes to the careers service, guidance should be provided for schools in overcoming stereotyping in their careers advice. This should also aim to help tackle stereotyping by parents.

**Recommendation 9:** The Government should undertake a communications drive to increase take-up of free childcare amongst ethnic minority women.

**Recommendation 10:** Guidance should be developed by the Government or the third sector for nursery providers on how to provide culturally sensitive nursery care.

**Recommendation 11:** Increasing take-up of free childcare by ethnic minority women should form a key part of the Government's childcare commission.

**Recommendation 12:** Given the larger numbers of older women from Pakistani and Bangladeshi backgrounds entering the workplace for the first time, Job Centre Plus should be clear on how they are meeting the specific needs of these women, particularly taking into account cultural and language needs.

**Recommendation 13:** Somali women have extremely high rates of inactivity and disadvantage. The Cabinet Office should pay close attention to the situation of Somali women in addition to its current focus on Pakistani and Bangladeshi women.

**Recommendation 14:** It should be considered whether cultural awareness training is needed for Job Centre Plus advisers in particular areas of the country.

**Recommendation 15:** The Government should consider monitoring the impact of its New Enterprise Allowance on ethnic minority women, as well as on other groups.

**Recommendation 16:** The Government needs to ensure its New Enterprise Allowance takes into account the needs and talents of older newly unemployed professional women by monitoring and publishing data on these groups.

**Recommendation 17:** The Government's Access to Finance Review should consider recommending that banks disclose who they lend to by ethnicity, gender and postcode. This will help determine whether ethnic minority women, as well as other groups, are being disproportionately denied credit.

**Recommendation 18:** Data on the impact of the Work Programme on ethnic minorities, including ethnic minority women, needs to be collected and published if this has not taken place by the publication of this report.

**Recommendation 19:** ESOL providers need to look into providing services more suited to women's needs, particularly taking into account the need for childcare provision and family-friendly class times.

**Recommendation 20:** Pre-courses should be introduced in areas of high need and demand to help women who are struggling in mainstream ESOL provision.

**Recommendation 21:** The Government should look at ways to encourage more work-focused ESOL classes for those who want them. This could involve course syllabuses being linked to vocational information, as well as a link to job searches.

**Recommendation 22:** The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills should make public its data on apprenticeship starts and completions based on ethnicity and gender combined. In addition, the Government should record and publish data on the impact of its employment initiatives on ethnic minorities and women separately, as well as combined where available data allows.

**Recommendation 23:** All government employment programmes and policies should monitor and publish data on take-up and success, by ethnicity and gender separately, as well as combined where available data allows.

**Recommendation 24:** It is positive that the National Apprenticeship Service intends to embed diversity good practice throughout its services in due course. We would urge them to also address specific needs of ethnic minority women in its diversity initiatives going forward.

## 1. Introduction

1.1. This is the final report of the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Race and Community's inquiry into ethnic minority female unemployment. The inquiry involved oral evidence sessions in parliament, discussion groups with unemployed women around the country and the collection of written evidence from a range of witnesses.<sup>1</sup> A short film accompanies this report.<sup>2</sup>

1.2. This report has been signed up to by the APPG's sub-committee, who are as follows: David Lammy MP (Chair), Debbie Abrahams MP, Baroness Berridge, Baroness Hussein-Ece and Baroness Benjamin. This report does not necessarily express the views of all members of the APPG. This sub-committee will from now on be referred to as 'the Committee' throughout the remainder of this Report.

### Definitions

1.3. Throughout the report the terms 'unemployment rate' and 'economically inactive' will be used frequently. These terms are understood in this report as follows:<sup>3</sup>

- The unemployment rate is the percentage of the economically active population who are unemployed according to the definition of the International Labour Organisation.
- Economically inactive refers to those who are not working, but are also not seeking work and are not available for work.

1.4. This report and inquiry does not focus on all ethnic minority women, and it was decided that it should just focus on Black African, Black

<sup>1</sup> This report has been drafted by the Runnymede Trust, which acts as secretariat for the APPG, in partnership with the inquiry's sub-committee of APPG members.

<sup>2</sup> The film is available here: <http://www.runnymedetrust.org/projects-and-publications/parliament/appg-2/appg-inquiry.html>

<sup>3</sup> Terms used as defined in Work and Pensions Committee (2012) *Youth Unemployment and the Youth Contract*. London: House of Commons..

Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women for reasons outlined in section 2.3 below. The Committee recognises, however, that such groupings do not always capture the diversity within different ethnic groups, as well as the individual ethnic groups which make up the whole category. This is particularly the case for Black women who are an extremely varied group made up of Black Caribbean, Somali, Nigerian, Kenyan, Ugandan and women of many other backgrounds, and there are different outcomes and unemployment rates for all of these groups. If possible our conclusions and analysis will be broken down by specific group, but sometimes this is not possible due to lack of specific data.

1.5. Finally, wherever possible we refer to specific data relating to ethnic minority women, but sometimes this is not possible due to lack of data regarding both of these characteristics being available. In this instance we still refer to data regarding ethnic minorities in general, but then aim to refer to specific information regarding women collected as part of the inquiry to help form more specific conclusions.

### Terms of references

1.6. As part of this inquiry we decided to focus on the following terms of reference:

- To determine whether unemployment rates of Black, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women are being more affected by the current recession compared to previous recessions;
- To determine the reasons behind the high levels of unemployment of these particular groups;
- To determine how effective current policies are in addressing unemployment levels of the target groups;
- To determine whether further intervention is needed, and if so, determine what this should look like;
- To find out what impact redundancy and unemployment is having on lone mothers and their children among the target groups;
- To determine whether there have been changes in labour market inactivity of certain groups, and if so, find out why.

### Evidence collected

1.7. We used a range of methods to collect evidence as part of this inquiry. We held two oral evidence sessions in parliament, at which the APPG heard evidence from a number of witnesses including academics, those from the private sector, the public sector and the charity sector, which are listed at the end of this report.

1.8. We held three evidence sessions outside parliament with local women in Tottenham, Manchester and Oldham. We spoke to approximately 32 women as part of these sessions. A short film accompanies this inquiry which includes video testimonies of women involved in these discussions.

1.9. We received 27 written evidence submissions from a range of individuals and organisations, including charities, trade unions, local authorities and academics. A full list is available at the end of this report.

## 2. Background to Ethnic Minority Female Unemployment in the UK

2.1. For all groups except Indian men, ethnic minority unemployment has consistently remained higher than the rate for white people since records began.<sup>4</sup> The unemployment rates of ethnic minority men have, on the whole, received the most attention of recent years, partly due to particularly shocking statistics around the unemployment rates of young Black and Asian men.<sup>5</sup> This emphasis may sometimes give the impression that, on the whole, ethnic minority men have higher unemployment rates than ethnic minority women. However, in reality, the overall unemployment rate for ethnic minority women is higher than that for men, being 14.3% compared to 13.2%, as will be clear from Fig. 1 below.

2.2. The picture is more complex when looking at individual groups. The unemployment rate of Black women is lower than Black men (17.7% compared to 21.7%), whilst the unemployment rate of Pakistani/Bangladeshi women is much higher than that of their male counterparts (20.5% for women compared to 12.8% for men). Unemployment rates

<sup>4</sup> See EJB Rose (1969), *Colour and Citizenship*.

<sup>5</sup> For example, 55.5% of economically active Black men, aged 16–24, are unemployed (ONS, 2012).

PERCENTAGE OF ETHNIC GROUP IN EMPLOYMENT						
	Employment Rate		Unemployment Rate		Inactivity Rate	
	MEN	WOMEN	MEN	WOMEN	MEN	WOMEN
White	76.6%	67.6%	8.3%	6.8%	16.4%	27.5%
Mixed or Multiple	64.3%	55.3%	15.7%	15.8%	23.7%	34.3%
Black	61.4%	55.6%	21.7%	17.7%	21.6%	32.4%
Indian	77.0%	60.6%	8.2%	11.1%	16.2%	31.9%
Pakistani/Bangladeshi	68.7%	28.9%	12.8%	20.5%	21.3%	63.6%
Chinese & Other	67.0%	51.8%	10.3%	10.6%	25.3%	42.1%
Ethnic Minority	68.2%	50.8%	13.2%	14.3%	21.5%	40.8%
All	75.6%	65.6%	8.9%	7.5%	17.0%	29.1%

Figure 1: Source: Labour Force Survey 2011 ([http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/adhoc\\_analysis/2012/labour\\_market\\_status\\_by\\_ethnicity.xls](http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/adhoc_analysis/2012/labour_market_status_by_ethnicity.xls))

of Indian women are also higher than those for Indian men (11.1% compared to 8.2%). Despite the varying picture for different ethnic minority groups, the evidence suggests that ethnic minority female unemployment is arguably as pressing a problem as ethnic minority male unemployment. This becomes even starker when considering that all groups of ethnic minority women – even those from the arguably more prosperous and ‘successful’ Chinese and Indian communities<sup>6</sup> – are more likely to be unemployed than both white men and white women. It is important to note that the Committee also recognises the high unemployment rates of Gypsies, Roma and Travellers, which will be addressed in Paragraph 2.4 below.

2.3. Taking the above into account, the Committee felt that ethnic minority female unemployment was an important issue to explore in more detail. However, given that individual minority ethnic groups face different challenges and experiences, the Committee decided to focus on just four groups – Black Caribbean, Black African, Bangladeshi and Pakistani women. These groups were chosen partly because of their high unemployment rates compared to most other minority ethnic women, and also due to specific issues facing these groups such as high rates of lone motherhood for Black Caribbean and Black African women (59% and 43% respectively, compared to 22% for white women<sup>7</sup>) and high inactivity rates for Bangladeshi and Pakistani women.

2.4. The Committee recognises that women from other minority ethnic groups face high unemployment levels, particularly those from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller backgrounds. The group made a decision not to focus on all minority ethnic groups because it felt that a short inquiry on this issue would not do justice to the range of challenges and issues facing each group and wanted to avoid a broad brush approach. Regarding Gypsy, Roma and Traveller women in particular it was felt that currently there is not enough data available to make substantial conclusions about female unemployment of these groups, but the Committee hopes that with the release of new census data in 2013, which recorded data from Gypsy and Irish Traveller communities, it may be able to focus more attention on these groups in the New Year.

2.5. There has been limited parliamentary attention given to ethnic minority female unemployment, particularly in comparison to ethnic minority male unemployment. There are occasional mentions in each House on the issue – indeed there have been more of late largely due to increased mentions by parliamentarians involved in this inquiry. However, no Select Committee or APPG has looked at this issue in detail, and this will be the first ever Parliamentary report specifically on the issue of Black, Pakistani and Bangladeshi female unemployment.

2.6. In addition, thus far there has been little attention given to this issue by the current government. The Government has maintained that it wants to approach unemployment by looking at the specific needs of the individual ‘irrespective

6 See EHRC Triennial Review: <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/key-projects/how-fair-is-britain>

7 *Ethnicity and Family* by Lucinda Platt. London: Equality and Human Rights Commission. Available at: [http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded\\_files/raceinbritain/ethnicity\\_and\\_family\\_report.pdf](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded_files/raceinbritain/ethnicity_and_family_report.pdf)

of ethnicity<sup>8</sup> whilst the recently departed Race Equality Minister Andrew Stunell MP stated that the Government has a 'colour-blind' approach to race equality.<sup>9</sup> The Committee however notes recent work from the Department for Communities and Local Government around equal access to finance, and welcomes the recognition of challenges facing Pakistani and Bangladeshi women in the Cabinet Office's updated Social Mobility Strategy (Cabinet Office, 2012). We therefore hope that this report will help inform future government work in this area.

2.7. Finally, it is important to add that this report is based primarily on the evidence submitted to the APPG's inquiry. The Committee of the APPG is keen to continue to hold a watching brief on the issue of Black, Pakistani and Bangladeshi female unemployment, and is keen to be alerted to future research developments on this issue.

### 3. The Impact of the Current Recession

3.1. Evidence from previous research highlights that in all previous recessions ethnic minorities – particularly men – have been hit harder by unemployment than in the wider population, and have taken longer to recover when the economy returns to growth.<sup>10</sup> The Committee wanted to determine whether this recession is having a greater impact on Black, Bangladeshi and Pakistani women compared to previous recessions.

3.2. Professor Anthony Heath of Oxford University stated that the unemployment rate of Black women has remained at roughly double that of white women since 1972. He added that even in times when unemployment has increased overall, this ratio has remained the same, except for a brief period in the 1980s when the gap got even worse. He added there has been no decrease over time or over generations in ethnic minority unemployment rates overall (both men and women), and that the second generation still experience unemployment rates which are as high as those of the first generation.

8 See response to Kate Green MP's parliamentary written question (22/02/2012): <http://www.theyworkforyou.com/wrans/?id=2012-02-22b.95070.h&s=kate+green#g95070.q0>.

9 Runnymede Trust Liverpool Race Equality Question Time, 19 July 2012. Recording available here: <http://www.runnymedetrust.org/resources/podcasts/liverpool-race-equality-question-time.html>

10 'Ethnicity and public sector employment during the current recession' by Yaojun Li (forthcoming)

3.3. It was advised that unemployment data for Pakistani and Bangladeshi women before 1983 is unreliable due to small samples, extremely high inactivity rates and the fact that there were smaller numbers of women from these groups residing in the UK at this time.<sup>11</sup> Evidence submitted by Yaojun Li showed that after 1983 the unemployment rate of Pakistani and Bangladeshi women has remained consistently and substantially higher than the rate for white women, with the gap becoming even larger in the early 1990s and falling between 2000 and 2004. The gap grew again after 2004, but not as dramatically as in the mid-1990s.<sup>12</sup>

#### Redundancies

3.4. The Committee particularly wanted to determine whether Black, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women have been hit harder by redundancies and unemployment during this recession. There was a particular concern from the Committee that, given the high numbers of women from these groups working in the public sector, job cuts in this section of the workforce may have a disproportionate impact on Black, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women and inflate their overall unemployment figures, a concern which was also shared by some who submitted evidence to the inquiry.<sup>13</sup> Fig. 2 on p.10 below, highlights the percentages of ethnic minorities working in the public sector in 2007, before public sector spending cuts began.

3.5. There was also a concern that Black, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women would be more likely to be made redundant in other sectors, such as the private sector, in comparison with other women due to discrimination in the work place. A number of witnesses highlighted that there are better anti-discrimination and equality policies in the public sector than in the private sector for example. However, it was not assumed that redundancy in the private sector would necessarily be any worse than in previous recessions.<sup>14</sup>

3.6. A number of witnesses stated that it is, as yet, difficult to know for certain how recent waves of redundancies have impacted on ethnic minority women. This is because widespread data on

11 Submission on Pakistani and Bangladeshi female unemployment, Yaojun Li

12 Submission on Pakistani and Bangladeshi female unemployment, Yaojun Li

13 Such as the evidence provided by Bradford District Council

14 Manchester evidence session

PERCENTAGE OF ETHNIC GROUP WORKING IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR				
	Men		Women	
	All	Full-Time Only	All	Full-Time Only
White British	15.9%	15.9%	34.0%	34.2%
Indian	15.9%	16.2%	29.9%	31.3%
Pakistani	9.5%	10.5%	37.2%	41.0%
Bangladeshi	9.7%	11.4%	36.4%	40.0%
Black Caribbean	20.8%	21.2%	45.6%	48.8%
Black African	21.3%	23.2%	33.9%	38.3%
All	16.1%	16.1%	34.0%	34.5%

Figure 2: Source: Professor Lucinda Platt, Institute for Education, 2007.

redundancies is not yet available, and in some cases, may not even be recorded. Sandra Kerr from Race for Opportunity stated, for example, that 'no one' is adequately monitoring redundancies by ethnicity, whilst Professor Monder Ram from De Montfort University said that a well-placed organisation such as the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) is unable to monitor this data because they do not have the resources to do so. Yvonne Coghill from the NHS also stated that data on the more recent wave of redundancies in her organisation is not yet available.

3.7. Despite this lack of concrete evidence, a number of witnesses stated that early anecdotal findings suggest that the target groups for this inquiry have been affected. Unite said that early evidence they have received suggests that Black women in particular are being hit hard by public sector job cuts, particularly front-line workers, who are more likely to be Black women. In addition, many individuals spoken to in regional evidence sessions for this inquiry have suggested that Black, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women working in the public sector are being affected.<sup>15</sup> The Committee notes this anecdotal evidence, but is reluctant to make firm conclusions on redundancy patterns without hard data.

3.8. Some witnesses called for stronger action on monitoring those being made redundant from organisations so firm conclusions on redundancies can be made. Collette Cork-Hurst from Unite called for mandatory monitoring of the workforce for all employers, whilst Professor Monder Ram argued that monitoring is required under the Equality Act, but is not being enforced across the board.

3.9. From the evidence outlined above, it is clear that there is lack of clarity amongst organisations and academics over whether or not redundancy data broken down by ethnicity should or is being monitored, and whether this should or has been made public. However, as hinted at by Professor Ram, and as outlined in evidence submitted by Equanomics UK, monitoring of redundancies in the public sector by ethnicity, by employers of 150 people or more, is recommended under the current guidance on the Equality Act from the EHRC. Indeed, Equanomics UK makes the point that:

*We would argue that equality monitoring of redundancies, by public sector bodies subject to the specific equality duties, should be taking place pursuant to the Equality Act 2010.*

3.10. However, there is currently no clear and easy way to access and analyse this data in one place. It is worth noting that the Runnymede Trust, which acts as secretariat for this APPG, is working with a number of trade unions to issue a large number of Freedom of Information requests to public sector organisations throughout the country in order to determine the impact of public sector reform, including redundancies, on ethnic minorities.<sup>16</sup> However this is a large scale task, which is unable to comprehensively monitor all public sector organisations, and would be extremely difficult for one small charity to undertake on a yearly basis.

3.11. The Committee notes that data of this kind is currently being monitored, collected and collated elsewhere in the UK, as highlighted by

<sup>16</sup> More information available here: <http://www.runnymedetrust.org/projects-and-publications/projects/employment-2.html>

Professor Anthony Heath in his follow-up evidence to the inquiry regarding best practice in Northern Ireland.<sup>17</sup> Here, all registered and specified employers with over 10 employees are required to monitor the composition of their workforce and of those applying, appointed, leaving or being promoted.<sup>18</sup> In addition, the specific equality duties for Wales require Welsh public authorities to collect and publish the number of the authority's employees who have 'left the employment of the authority'.<sup>19</sup>

**Recommendation 1:** Better information on ethnic minority female unemployment is needed. A government department or non-departmental public body should collect this data and consider publishing a regular report on public sector redundancies broken down by ethnicity.

**Recommendation 2:** There is a lack of clarity around whether the public sector needs to monitor job losses by ethnicity. This needs to be clarified and communicated to employers.

3.12. Equanomics UK also argued that whilst there is no statutory obligation for the private sector to publish such data, statutory and non-statutory guidance advises employers to publish this data in certain circumstances and consider how to explore the data with relevant parties, for example with the workforce and trade unions.

**Recommendation 3:** Monitoring redundancies by ethnicity, as well as gender and ethnicity combined, should be held up as best practice for employers. The Government should encourage this as part of its Social Mobility Compact with business and in procurement.

3.13. What is clear is that monitoring by gender and ethnicity combined – 'dual characteristics' – is not required under the Equality Act itself or in any related guidance, and as highlighted by Equanomics UK this is also not addressed under the EHRC's statutory code on employment. In addition, the Committee notes that Section 14 of the Equality Act 2010, which focuses on discrimination based on combined characteristics, is not intended to be brought into force by the Government.

<sup>17</sup> Submission on the Northern Ireland programme of affirmative action, Professor Anthony Heath

<sup>18</sup> Equality Commission for Northern Ireland: Fair Employment Monitoring (2011): <http://www.equalityni.org/archive/pdf/FairEmpMonitoringComptrendsovertimeDec11.pdf>

<sup>19</sup> The Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011, Reg 9.

**Recommendation 4:** Organisations such as the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC), the Government Equalities Office (GEO) and charities should explore ways of capturing unemployment data on dual characteristics which do not create an excessive burden for businesses.

## 4. Reasons Behind Ethnic Minority Female Unemployment

4.1. A number of barriers to employment were highlighted throughout the inquiry. These included racial and gender discrimination; language and cultural barriers; childcare issues; educational achievement; self-selecting out of certain professions; lack of networks and social capital; and unavailability of work.

4.2. We have not attempted to determine which of these factors have had the most impact on unemployment rates of the target groups as this kind of detailed analysis was not possible within the scope of this inquiry. However, we believe that evidence shows that there are varied and complex barriers facing Black, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women which are different from those facing white women or ethnic minority men. Based on this, we would argue that the Government's 'colour-blind' approach to tackling unemployment is not appropriate in dealing with the specific issues facing women from these groups, and we therefore make recommendations in accordance with this.

### Availability of work

4.3. From the outset it is important to acknowledge that the economic downturn is likely to have had an impact on the amount of jobs available, therefore exacerbating levels of unemployment for ethnic minority women. This is likely to be made worse by the fact that many ethnic minorities are likely to live in areas with higher unemployment – for example evidence submitted by Women Working in the North Network highlighted that many ethnic minority women they work with are located in former manufacturing towns with high unemployment, whilst women interviewed in Oldham also pointed to the lack of jobs in their particular area as being a problem. The Committee is therefore keen to support efforts from the Government and others to create more jobs.

4.4. It is clear from evidence collected as part of this inquiry, however, that lack of availability to work is far from being the only reason behind high unemployment rates, and nearly all of our witnesses and those submitting written evidence pointed to issues such as discrimination, culture, language and lack of networks as being of primary concern.

## Discrimination

4.5. The majority of organisations and individuals who provided evidence to the inquiry cited racial discrimination as a key barrier to employment for Black, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women. There was a definite feeling amongst many witnesses that the Government and employers are not taking the issue seriously enough and there was a feeling that wider society incorrectly believed that racial discrimination was no longer an issue in the UK.<sup>20</sup>

4.6. Most strikingly, Professor Anthony Heath stated that, despite being difficult to measure, he and Professor Yaojun Li have calculated that 25% of the ethnic minority unemployment rate could be attributable to prejudice and discrimination.<sup>21</sup> The sheer volume of other evidence presented to the inquiry highlighting discrimination as a key cause of unemployment for ethnic minority women reinforces this finding.

### *a) Discrimination in the application process*

4.7. Witnesses pushed forward a range of compelling evidence showing that racial discrimination is still a major cause of high unemployment rates of some groups of ethnic minority women. Many drew attention to research carried out by the Department for Work and Pensions in 2008 which found that if you have an African or Asian sounding surname you need to send approximately twice as many job applications as those with a traditionally British name even to get an interview.<sup>22</sup>

4.8. Individuals interviewed as part of the research identified with this finding, and some even mentioned that they changed their name to something more traditionally British on their CVs, which then resulted in being offered more

interviews.<sup>23</sup> For example, a Pakistani woman in Oldham mentioned that a colleague of hers had to change her name to get her current job as a qualified solicitor, whilst another mentioned a friend who:

*From her appearance you can not tell she is a Muslim, but she has a Muslim name and when she mentions her name [to employers] that's it - they back off. (Pakistani woman, Oldham)*

4.9. Blank name application forms were proposed by the majority of witnesses and interviewees as a potential solution to reducing discrimination when short-listing job applicants. The Committee recognises and supports the Government's Social Mobility Compact with business which encourages organisations involved to use blank name application forms in recruitment.

**Recommendation 5:** The Government should publish an action plan to increase take-up of blank name application forms, with the Government leading the way by piloting its use in at least one of its departments.

### *b) Discrimination in interviews – Black women*

4.10. Stereotyping and discrimination once ethnic minority women reach interview stage was also cited as an area of concern. For example, a number of Black women interviewed as part of the inquiry highlighted negativity they had received in job interviews. In particular, those who had a 'British' or 'European' sounding name said that attitudes of prospective employers dramatically changed once they met them at interview and realised they were not white. One interviewee said:

*At an interview there were two of us going for the same job, me and a white girl. The interviewer called my name 'Lucy Smith' and looked at the white girl. I said 'sorry darling, I am over here' and her face just dropped. She was very cold throughout the interview. All because my name did not fit the image I was giving them. (Black woman, Tottenham<sup>24</sup>)*

4.11. A number of Black African women interviewed argued that their experience and qualifications were valued less than those of white women. One Black African woman interviewed in Manchester, a qualified lawyer who entered the UK from Nigeria, said that two white women

<sup>20</sup> For example, Collette Cork-Hurst from Unite, Professor Anthony Heath, Professor Monder Ram, Manchester evidence session.

<sup>21</sup> For example, stated by Professor Anthony Heath in oral evidence session 1

<sup>22</sup> For example Professor Anthony Heath in oral evidence session 1

<sup>23</sup> Oldham and Manchester evidence sessions

<sup>24</sup> Name changed for anonymity reasons

were employed over her for a law-based position, despite the fact that she was better qualified and more experienced. These two women were later found to be incompetent and sacked, leading to the Black African woman being invited to take the job.<sup>25</sup> A number of other highly qualified women cited examples of their experience and qualifications gained in other countries, as well as conversion qualifications gained in this country, being overlooked.

4.12. The Committee acknowledges that these examples cannot be wholly attributed to racism, and could partly be due to some workplaces not recognising some overseas qualifications. However, it does suggest that some employers may be unnecessarily overlooking individuals who could make a valuable contribution to their workplace and productivity. In the case of the example of the lawyer above, the employers' decision to employ two under-qualified white women who were eventually sacked, over a qualified Black woman, resulted in a negative impact on the organisation which could have been avoided.

**Recommendation 6:** Professional associations should provide improved guidance offering greater clarity regarding the equivalency between UK and overseas qualifications and experience of employment.

4.13. In addition, some women interviewed as part of the inquiry stated that despite being able to speak English fluently, their accent had acted as a barrier to them getting employment.<sup>26</sup> For example a French and Spanish teacher from French-speaking Cameroon who could also speak English, said that whilst she did not have a problem finding a job in France, she was struggling to get a post teaching in the UK:

*As soon as you open your mouth and it is not BBC English they don't want to know you. I have been learning English here and have done PGCE course here. All my college colleagues have got [a] job [in teaching] but I haven't. I am told I will have communication problems... language and communication is [a] real barrier. (Black African woman, Manchester)*

c) *Discrimination in interviews – Muslim women*

4.14. Muslim women wearing the hijab were

identified as facing discrimination in interviews. Zamila Bunglawala highlighted some of her own research during the inquiry, which found that some Muslim women who removed their hijab for interviews were successful in getting a job, having worn their hijab to previous interviews and being unsuccessful.<sup>27</sup> In addition, the London Borough of Tower Hamlets cited evidence from the Equality and Human Rights Commission which found that 1 in 5 Bangladeshi women under 35 experienced negative comments about wearing religious dress.<sup>28</sup>

4.15. This evidence was backed up with individual statements made during the oral evidence sessions in Manchester and Oldham. A group of Pakistani and Bangladeshi women in Oldham mentioned a number of friends and relatives who wear hijab who have found it particularly difficult to find jobs. For some of the older women, discrimination towards hijab wearers was met with a grudging acceptance, with one woman stating that she decided to stop wearing the hijab many years ago in order to help her get a job. The same group of women however stated that younger women were more likely to choose to wear the hijab, including those who were highly educated.

4.16. One of the women spoke about how her friend, who is a recent first class graduate from a Russell Group university, has struggled to find work and believes that her 'decision to wear the hijab is restricting her from getting a job'. She added that because her friend experiences a bad reception at interviews she has even considered 'taking the hijab off' while looking for a job and then 'putting it back on once she has found employment'. The same girl has been successful obtaining work where she has not required a face-to-face-interview, such as marking exam papers.

d) *Gender and dual discrimination in interviews*

4.17. In addition to racial discrimination, there was also evidence of Black, Bangladeshi and Pakistani women facing sex discrimination in interviews. A number of women, both Black and Asian, stated that they faced questions about plans for marriage and motherhood in interviews, with some facing hostility if they stated that they already had children or were pregnant, particularly if they requested flexible working.<sup>29</sup> One woman explained:

<sup>27</sup> Zamila Bunglawala (2008), *Valuing Family, Valuing Work: British Muslim Women and the Labour Market*. London: Young Foundation.

<sup>28</sup> Kabeer and Ainsworth (2011), cited in Tower Hamlets written evidence

<sup>29</sup> Manchester and Tottenham evidence sessions

<sup>25</sup> Manchester focus group

<sup>26</sup> Manchester focus group

*Anytime I go to interviews, I am always asked 'How many children have you got?' What has that got to do with my credentials and experience? By then you see them thinking I don't know if you will be suitable for us. (Black Woman, Tottenham)*

4.18. Some witnesses stated that it was assumed by employers that Bangladeshi and Pakistani women would leave if they were planning to have children or intending to soon marry, meaning that these women were less likely to be offered jobs.<sup>30</sup> It was also felt that similarly negative stereotypes applied to Black women, with one woman stating:

*There are negative connotations attached to Black women. They portray us as single mums, with a bag full of children and who are idle. (Black woman, Tottenham)*

4.19. These examples not only relate to gender discrimination, but are also examples of dual discrimination because these women are being discriminated against specifically because they are ethnic minority women, rather than just being women, or just being from an ethnic minority.

4.20. In addition, it is worth noting that some examples cited in the 'racial discrimination' sections above also fall under dual discrimination. For example, there are both gender and religious discrimination elements to the prejudice faced by hijab-wearing Muslim women, and not just race.

4.21. The Committee notes that the Government has decided to not bring into force the section of the Equality Act which would make dual characteristic discrimination unlawful, which is addressed in further detail in Paragraph 3.13 and Recommendation 4 above.

#### *e) Recruitment agencies*

4.22. The Ethnic Minority Advisory Group (EMAG) and Sandra Kerr from Race for Opportunity highlighted that even though ethnic minority women generally make more use of recruitment agencies compared to the wider population, they are more likely to feel they are unfairly treated by these organisations. In particular, Sandra Kerr highlighted that only 29% of ethnic minority individuals are getting jobs through this channel compared to 44% of white people, adding that recruitment consultants will often push those 'who are easier to place' forward for jobs. Further research carried out by Race for Opportunity found

that last year only 57% of ethnic minority applicants were invited to interviews through a recruitment agency, compared to 73% of white candidates.

4.23. However, when applying directly to an employer, outcomes were much more equal, with 29% of ethnic minority applicants and 29% of white applicants securing jobs. This suggests that recruitment agencies may be wrongly writing off ethnic minority applicants due to an assumption that employers would not want to hire them. Some women who gave evidence as part of the inquiry also expressed a frustration with recruitment agencies.<sup>31</sup>

**Recommendation 7:** Recruitment agencies are important players in access to employment and should be better engaged with these issues. They should therefore work closely with their staff to help reduce unconscious bias and to help them engage effectively with ethnic minority candidates.

4.24. Despite the prevalence of more negative experiences with recruitment agencies, it is also worth highlighting the more positive example of Rare Recruitment, a recruitment agency which is dedicated to placing high achieving ethnic minority graduates in top professions, including banks, the civil service and Magic Circle law firms. The majority of the candidates on their books are female and Black, and Rare Recruitment manages to place a quarter of their candidates in full time employment, a figure which reflects the competitiveness of the industries they are working with. They work closely with candidates to train them up for interviews and entry exams, and have argued that they substantially increase the chances of ethnic minority candidates getting a good job.

#### *f) Discrimination within the workplace*

4.25. Other cultural and religious practices were also cited as being a disadvantage within the workplace for all ethnic minority women, making them more vulnerable to redundancy. For Muslim women, convincing employers to allow time in the day for Muslim prayer was cited as a difficulty and lack of attendance at work social occasions in pubs was argued by some witnesses as being a disadvantage for future job prospects within an

30 Manchester and Tottenham evidence sessions

31 'Race and Recruitment: Exposing the Barriers' by Race for Opportunity (2011). Available at: [http://www.bitcdiversity.org.uk/resources/rfo\\_recruitment\\_toolkit/](http://www.bitcdiversity.org.uk/resources/rfo_recruitment_toolkit/)

organisation.<sup>32</sup> In addition, a number of witnesses cited that different cultural practices could be a disadvantage for ethnic minority women in the workplace, for example the view in some cultures that extended eye contact is impolite.<sup>33</sup> One Black African woman interviewed said:

*In my country the hierarchy between manager and a worker is very [pronounced]. Here it is different – a worker can go out for a drink with a manager... [but workers from her background] don't feel comfortable having a drink with a manager. In our culture we don't talk 'I, I, I' as it is considered very rude... [but] here it's all about 'I, I, I' [in interviews and in the workplace]. (Black African Woman, Manchester)*

4.26. Yvonne Coghill from the NHS highlighted how not drinking alcohol and not entering pubs can limit opportunities for Muslim women, as it means they are not 'part of the mix' at work network events. This could make them be seen as outsiders and thus more vulnerable to redundancy. Whilst Coghill suggested Muslim women should consider going along to these events even if they do not drink at them, Noor Ali from Morrisons argued that Muslims should not feel as if they should enter pubs to further their career as this is not allowed under their religion. She added that it is more important to change other people's views of Muslim culture, which has been her approach.

## Language issues

4.27. Evidence from a range of witnesses highlighted that low English language skills were a significant barrier for Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Somali women in finding employment,<sup>34</sup> although it was also stated that the younger generation of women from these groups was identified as having better English language skills than their mothers.<sup>35</sup>

4.28. Relating to this, many concerns were raised around ESOL provision during the inquiry, and these concerns, as well as other issues around language, will be addressed in full in Section 6 below on current government policy.

## Cultural attitudes towards women

4.29. Cultural attitudes towards women within ethnic minority groups were highlighted by some witnesses as causing barriers to employment, particularly in Bangladeshi and Pakistani communities. Evidence from Hopscotch and Bradford District Council for example stated that it is common for married women from these backgrounds to seek permission of their husband before looking for or taking a job. In addition, it was highlighted that a large number of women from these backgrounds felt that their main responsibility was to care for their husband and children. These issues also came up when looking at inactivity rates, which will be dealt with in Section 5.

4.30. However Professor Monder Ram argued that this is becoming less of an issue among younger women from Pakistani and Bangladeshi backgrounds who are more likely to want to work, and who are more likely to be born in the UK. Professor Ram in particular stressed that the differential employment rates could also be due to issues other than culture, and it is therefore important to keep in mind points made in relation to discrimination around wearing the hijab in sections 4.14 to 4.16 above.

4.31. Despite this, it is clear from the evidence that even though culture may only be part of the story for unemployment rates of young Pakistani and Bangladeshi women, there is still pressure on girls from these groups from parents and schools to pursue only certain types of careers, such as 'culturally acceptable' roles in childcare, health and social care.<sup>36</sup> EMAG for example pointed to evidence showing that Pakistani and Bangladeshi girls tend to be steered into 'appropriate' occupations by parents and by their careers advisers at schools. EMAG also highlighted that there is currently little guidance available for schools on overcoming stereotyping, and little experience of schools careers services in addressing inequalities. Whilst these kinds of cultural attitudes do not explicitly prevent or prohibit employment, they do limit women's choices. In the current climate where public sector jobs in care and health are being reduced, this kind of restriction is likely to be a disadvantage to Pakistani and Bangladeshi women.

**Recommendation 8:** As part of the changes to the careers service, guidance should be provided for schools in overcoming stereotyping in their

<sup>32</sup> Oldham evidence session, parliamentary oral evidence session 2

<sup>33</sup> Manchester session, Yvonne Coghill in oral evidence session 2

<sup>34</sup> Oxfam, Tower Hamlets, NIACE

<sup>35</sup> Professor Anthony Heath, oral evidence session 1

<sup>36</sup> Hopscotch submission and Manchester evidence session

careers advice. This should also aim to help tackle stereotyping by parents.

### Childcare

4.32. Concerns around take up of and access to childcare was cited as a key barrier to employment by a large number of people providing evidence to the inquiry. A number of women interviewed for example cited high childcare costs as a barrier, and many were not aware of free childcare provision available.

4.33. Evidence provided by the Daycare Trust for example found that families from ethnic minority communities are less likely to take up tax credit support for childcare, which may be due to the complexity of the system, language barriers, lack of flexibility or negative past experience of tax credit over-payment. The Daycare Trust also highlighted that whilst all three to four year-old children are entitled to a free early education place, only 72% of Pakistani and 64% of Bangladeshi children take up these places compared to 89% of white children.

4.34. Zamilia Bunglawala also pointed to this issue during her oral evidence, arguing that Pakistani and Bangladeshi women are particularly likely not to take up free childcare places. She stressed that this is partly because these women have no experience of childcare and added that better information and communication is needed in these communities to increase take up. She added that the benefits of childcare to the mother and child are often not effectively communicated, and that there needs to be a greater understanding of cultural sensitivities and different patterns of care.

4.35. Whilst take up rates are higher for Black African and Black Caribbean children (71% and 74% respectively) are slightly higher, they are still far lower than for white children. This is particularly concerning given that 59% of Black Caribbean women are lone mothers and are frequently the sole breadwinner and carer.

4.36. In addition, some evidence highlighted that ethnic minority women are also much less likely to use informal childcare compared to white women. Daycare Trust evidence from a survey in 2011 highlighted that whilst 36% of white parents had used a family member to provide childcare in the last six months, only 23% of those from ethnic minority communities had done so.

4.37. All of these issues are likely to have an

impact on both unemployment and inactivity rates of ethnic minority women, with many likely to feel that employment is unfeasible given their lack of awareness of free childcare and lack of wider family support. In addition, evidence on pages 12-13 above highlights the prejudice and lack of support from employers that women and mothers looking for work have faced. Furthermore, the limited hours of free childcare combined with less flexible working hours may further close many opportunities for women.

**Recommendation 9:** The Government should undertake a communications drive to increase take-up of free childcare amongst ethnic minority women.

**Recommendation 10:** Guidance should be developed by the Government or the third sector for nursery providers on how to provide culturally sensitive nursery care.

**Recommendation 11:** Increasing take-up of free childcare by ethnic minority women should form a key part of the Government's childcare commission.

### Qualifications

4.38. EMAG highlighted that Black women are more likely to have degree qualifications than white women, and also pointed out that even though historically Pakistani and Bangladeshi women are less likely to have degrees than white women, this gap is likely to be rapidly closing. Despite this, evidence suggests that women from these groups are more likely to earn less than white women and have proportionally higher levels of unemployment. Reasons behind this were not explicitly highlighted as part of the inquiry, but the number of other barriers outlined in this section may play a part.

4.39. In addition, whilst gender specific figures were not presented in the inquiry in relation to types of university attended, previous Runnymede Trust research has found all minority ethnic students except those from Chinese backgrounds are more likely to attend 'new' universities.<sup>37</sup>

4.40. Sandra Kerr also cited Race for Opportunity research which found that only 37% of Pakistani women and 35% of Bangladeshi women found full time work one year after leaving full time education

<sup>37</sup> *Not Enough Understanding: Student Experiences of Diversity at UK Universities*, Jessica Mai Sims (2008, Runnymede Trust)

compared to 54% of white women.<sup>38</sup>

### The ‘chill factor’

4.41 There was evidence of ethnic minority women ‘self-selecting’ themselves out of jobs, as well as from the more prestigious universities. In his evidence, Professor Anthony Heath spoke of the ‘chill factor’, which he explained was a feeling from ethnic minorities that they would not fit into a particular workplace or institution, and would then decide not to apply, effectively de-selecting themselves from jobs.

4.42. Daniel Mokades from Rare Recruitment reiterated Heath’s point by stating that many women ‘self-select’ out of certain jobs and industries as they feel they are not good enough to get in. Working on recruitment from a different level, Cynthia Masiyiwa from Active Horizons, a youth participation charity, outlined how when recruiting for jobs at the Olympic Park from the local community, many women did not apply due to a lack of confidence. This barrier was overcome by engaging people door-to-door to help encourage them to apply and also to coach potential applicants and boost confidence. As a result, 100 people that her team worked with got jobs at the Olympic Park.

### Networks and social capital

4.43. Lack of networks and social capital was highlighted as a potential cause of high unemployment rates of the target groups. Professor Anthony Heath highlighted that informal recruitment, such as through ‘word of mouth’, cuts off opportunities for many ethnic minorities who may not have the links and networks to inform them about vacancies. Sandra Kerr also touched on this point, and explained that having smaller networks is a reason why ethnic minority women are more likely to use recruitment agencies and Job Centre Plus to find jobs as they do not have a large network to send them job opportunities and vacancies.

4.44. As highlighted in Paragraph 4.26, Yvonne Coghill from the NHS also highlighted how not drinking alcohol and not entering pubs can limit networking opportunities for Muslim women, meaning that there is a risk of them not building up strong networks within the workplace as well as outside of it.

## 5. Inactivity Rates

5.1. Whilst the central focus of this inquiry is on Black, Pakistani and Bangladeshi female unemployment, the Committee also wanted to place some focus on the inactivity rates of some groups of ethnic minority women in relation to how they relate to unemployment. As will be clear below, there were some concerns raised ahead of the inquiry that whilst some women will choose to be economically inactive, many may be involuntarily economically inactive due to barriers to employment.

### Pakistani and Bangladeshi women

5.2. As is evident from data from the Labour Force Survey, available in Figure 1 on page 8 above, Bangladeshi and Pakistani women experience high inactivity rates compared to other minority ethnic women, being 63.6% compared to 27.5% of white women and 32.4% for Black women. The rate is higher for overseas-born women – as highlighted by EMAG in their submission, 77% of overseas born Pakistani women are unemployed compared to 57% of UK born Pakistani women. Anthony Heath however highlighted that inactivity rates have decreased over time and over the generations, and it is worth noting that very large numbers of Pakistani and Bangladeshi women are now born in the UK as opposed to overseas.

5.3. There is much to examine regarding potential reasons behind these inactivity rates, such as cultural expectations of women and caring responsibilities, but the Committee has decided to focus on this issue solely in relation to how inactivity relates to employment. It is worth stating that the Committee does not want to condemn high inactivity rates if this is due to a conscious decision on the part of Bangladeshi and Pakistani women to stay at home to look after their families.

5.4. However, the Committee is concerned that these high inactivity rates may also be partly due to some Pakistani and Bangladeshi women ‘giving up’ looking for work due to the difficulty in finding a job. As is evident in Section 4 above, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women face extensive barriers in the labour market due to discrimination based on religion and ethnicity, lack of cultural understanding from employers, poor language skills and limited career choices. In addition, in our local evidence sessions there were some anecdotal examples given by women interviewed of friends and relatives giving up looking for work

<sup>38</sup> Originally highlighted in Race into Higher Education: 2011 Update, Race for Opportunity

due to the difficulties of finding employment.<sup>39</sup> Some also spoke of the despondency numerous rejections can cause, which can also contribute to stopping searching for work.<sup>40</sup>

5.5. Another concern is the impact inactivity rates can have on older Pakistani and Bangladeshi women who want to look for work later in life. As outlined by NIACE, large numbers of women from these backgrounds decide to stop studying when married or when having their first child, and as outlined by some other witnesses the same also applies in relation to work.<sup>41</sup> This can have a long term impact on women who decide to look for work when older – indeed due to benefit changes, many older Pakistani and Bangladeshi women are now entering the workplace for the first time with poor English skills and little to no work experience.<sup>42</sup>

5.6. Older Pakistani and Bangladeshi women looking for work for the first time face substantial challenges, and a number of people and organisations providing evidence to this inquiry highlighted how intimidating an experience looking for work and attending the Job Centre can be for these women.<sup>43</sup> This is explored in more detail in section 6 below.

**Recommendation 12:** Given the larger numbers of older women from Pakistani and Bangladeshi backgrounds entering the workplace for the first time, Job Centre Plus should be clear on how they are meeting the specific needs of these women, particularly taking into account cultural and language needs.

### Somali women

5.7. The APPG also wanted to acknowledge the challenges specifically facing Somali women, who were highlighted a number of times within the inquiry, but whose needs are frequently not taken into account due to them not being visibly captured in the statistical categories of 'Black' and 'Black African'.<sup>44</sup>

5.8. Professor Anthony Heath expressed particular concern regarding the unemployment

and inactivity rates of Somali women and, with Professor Yaojun Li, submitted follow-up evidence outlining data on Somali female inactivity rates.<sup>45</sup> As pointed out by both academics, the sample size is too small to make firm conclusions, but in absence of other clear data it is still important to take its findings into account. The analysed data found that out of those surveyed in the Labour Force Survey, 86.96% of Somali women were economically inactive, with only 10.23% working.

5.9. Part of this inactivity rate is again likely to be due to cultural preferences, expectations around childcare and women's role in the home, as well as difficulties in being granted legal migrant status, however evidence also highlights that there are huge barriers for Somali women if they are eligible or decide to work, which may be helping to inflate the inactivity rate.

5.10. Evidence submitted by Black Women's Health and Family Support, which works closely with Somali women, and the London Borough of Tower Hamlets found that women from this background are likely to be highly excluded due to language barriers. It was particularly highlighted that many Somali women had a disrupted education in their home country due to the civil war, including in their mother tongue language, making it particularly difficult for them to learn English.

5.11. In addition, large numbers of Somalis suffer from physical health problems, including injuries from the war, and many suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder for the same reason.<sup>46</sup>

5.12. The Committee welcomes the decision of the Cabinet Office to focus on the unemployment rates of Pakistani and Bangladeshi women as part of its updated Social Mobility Strategy. However, the Committee would argue that Somali women arguably face similarly, and in some cases, more pressing issues in relation to unemployment yet are often overlooked in debates around ethnicity and disadvantage due to not showing up in the data. Indeed, unlike some ethnic groups such as Gypsies and Travellers, data on the Somali community was not collected as part of the 2011 Census.

**Recommendation 13:** Somali women have extremely high rates of inactivity and disadvantage. The Cabinet Office should pay close attention

<sup>39</sup> Tottenham and Manchester evidence sessions

<sup>40</sup> Manchester evidence session

<sup>41</sup> Manchester evidence session

<sup>42</sup> Oldham evidence session, Manchester evidence session

<sup>43</sup> Oldham evidence session and elsewhere

<sup>44</sup> This data has also not been collected as part of the 2011 Census

<sup>45</sup> Evidence session 1, Written evidence

<sup>46</sup> Tower Hamlets submission

to the situation of Somali women in addition to its current focus on Pakistani and Bangladeshi women.

## 6 Effectiveness of Current Government Policies

6.1. The Committee was keen to determine whether current government policies are effective in reducing the unemployment rates of Black, Bangladeshi and Pakistani women. As mentioned in Paragraph 2.6, the Committee notes the Government's 'colour-blind' approach in its policies, and is keen to determine whether this is working in Job Centre Plus and other initiatives, or whether more tailored support is needed. The Committee also wanted to explore the effectiveness of ESOL provision given how crucial knowledge of English is to obtaining work.

6.2. The Committee also wanted to acknowledge that despite the Government's claim that it focuses on the needs of the unemployed 'irrespective of ethnicity' there are a small number of tailored approaches taking place such as the recently completed apprenticeship diversity pilots and work around bank lending practices to small business. The Committee wanted to determine whether such work has so far been effective.

### Job Centre Plus

6.3. One of the key issues the Committee wanted to address was whether current Job Centre Plus provision is adequate for ethnic minority women, particularly given the Government's overall colour blind approach. Determining this is even more crucial when taking into account Sandra Kerr from Race for Opportunity's point that ethnic minority women are more likely to use Job Centre Plus to find a job (as well as recruitment agencies) than white women, as mentioned in Paragraph 4.22.

6.4. We were keen to hear evidence directly from Job Centre Plus regarding their approach to tackling the specific needs of Black, Bangladeshi and Pakistani women, but unfortunately a representative was unable to attend our second oral evidence session due to other work commitments. However, the organisation's 2010 report into satisfaction rates of ethnic minorities with Job Centre Plus services, provides some indication of how useful ethnic minorities in general

are finding the service.<sup>47</sup>

6.5. Overall, the report found that there was no substantial difference between white and ethnic minority users in relation to satisfaction with Job Centre Plus. The key differences found were that ethnic minorities prefer face-to-face contact and particularly value politeness and friendliness of staff. Interestingly, the report also found that Asian customers who did not speak English as their first language were more satisfied with the service than other Asian customers (87% per cent compared with 74% per cent<sup>48</sup>).

6.6. These findings did not, however, wholly match the findings of our inquiry. Evidence submitted by EMAG found that minority ethnic groups are less likely than white groups to find Jobcentre Plus helpful. EMAG also highlighted a number of studies which found that Jobcentre Plus customers for whom English was not their first language had a less satisfactory experience than other customers.

#### a) Pakistani and Bangladeshi women

6.7. These findings were echoed in our interviews with affected women from Pakistani and Bangladeshi backgrounds. In Oldham all the women interviewed, who were of Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin, agreed that the lack of support given by Job Centre Plus advisers to Asian women is a major barrier to finding employment, especially for the older generation. The finding was echoed in our Manchester evidence session. Speaking from their own experience and the experience of family and friends, the Oldham participants claimed that Job Centre Plus advisers lacked understanding of Asian culture and traditions and as a result, their behaviour was 'harsh' or 'unhelpful', thus causing many women to turn away. One woman said:

*Advisers are not fully aware of the issues that certain communities face. They fail to understand that some women need spoon feeding throughout the process because they lack the knowledge. This is particularly true of the older generation as they have been housewives for 20 to 30 years. Not only do they lack knowledge but the whole process is really scary for them. (Pakistani woman, Oldham)*

6.8. In addition, the women stated that Job Centre Plus staff in Oldham were far more likely to be

47 Job Centre Plus: <http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/reports2009-2010/rrep717.pdf>

48 Job Centre Plus: <http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/reports2009-2010/rrep717.pdf>

white. They added that for some Asian women entering the Job Centre, it may be the first time they have spoken to a white person, making the situation particularly 'scary'. It is worth noting however that in some other areas of the county the diverse staff of Job Centre Plus has been praised, suggesting this may be a localised problem,<sup>49</sup> and the specific demographics of Oldham in particular need to be taken into account. However women in both Manchester and Oldham drew attention to the fact that there are many Pakistani and Bangladeshi women who are over 40 who are now looking for work for the first time, and therefore need particularly tailored support.

6.9. The fact that research highlighted by EMAG and evidence from this inquiry does uncover evidence that there is sometimes a lack of cultural understanding regarding the needs of Pakistani and Bangladeshi women in some areas suggests that the Government and Job Centre Plus need to look closely at this issue. Whilst the situation may differ around the country, Job Centre Plus needs to ensure that its services are not a 'postcode lottery' for Asian women. Indeed, a number of women interviewed in both Oldham and Manchester called for the Government to train job centre advisers and employers so that they are more culturally aware and sensitive to the needs of Pakistani and Bangladeshi women.

**Recommendation 14:** It should be considered whether cultural awareness training is needed for Job Centre Plus advisers in particular areas of the country.

*b) Black women*

6.10. Black women interviewed provided more mixed feedback on Job Centre Plus provision. Some were positive about the initial service, but expressed frustration once their unemployment became more long term:

*There are good advisers who listen to what you want to do and offer you jobs that are suited to your interests and skills. But now that I have been unemployed for 3 months I am now being pushed into jobs that I don't want to do....* (Black woman, Tottenham)

Others expressed that female advisers were more understanding of the caring responsibilities of women than male advisors:

*I have two advisers – a male and a female. The male adviser just pushes me into any jobs, but the female adviser is more understanding of the need to find me a job that suits my role as mother and wish to start a career.* (Black Caribbean woman, Tottenham)

6.11. However an issue highlighted in the Job Centre Plus report, which was echoed by some of our Black female interviewees, was around newly unemployed professionals. This category is particularly important to Black female unemployment due to the large numbers of these women who are likely to have lost their jobs under public sector job cuts, as mentioned in Section 3. People in this category interviewed as part of the Job Centre Plus report were highly skilled and qualified but stated that they felt as if these factors were not taken into account by staff and instead received advice which was 'patronising' and irrelevant to their needs. Women spoken to as part of this inquiry shared a similar experience. Some of these women had previously held middle-management positions in the public sector and had never been out of work before, and therefore did not find the advice provided by Job Centre Plus to be relevant to their skills and ambitions.<sup>50</sup>

*c) Support to set up a business*

6.12. Evidence gathered in Manchester and Tottenham identified a lack of support from Job Centre Plus in helping women set up their own businesses. A number of highly skilled women in Tottenham expressed an interest in setting up their own business, and had asked Job Centre Plus for support to do so. However, they reported that Job Centre Plus's response was unhelpful:

*We were told at the job centre in order to put a business idea forward we would have to be unemployed for 6 months... why [should] I have to wait, if I have a good idea, especially if it is going to provide jobs for people in my community?* (Black woman, Tottenham focus group)

Another Black woman in the same session said:

*You have the Prince's Trust, which supports 16–25 year olds who want to set up their own company. But there is no similar scheme for older females, offering us assistance with our business plans.*

6.13. A number of witnesses spoke about the difficulty Black women have in particular, but also

other ethnic minority women, in setting up small businesses due to having smaller professional networks.<sup>51</sup> In addition, whilst Professor Monder Ram argued that ethnic minority men have often gravitated towards running small businesses due to lack of opportunity in the mainstream market, few ethnic minority women run such businesses. It is clear however from our research, however, that there is a desire for Black women in particular to set up businesses, and the Committee believes they should be helped to do so.

6.14. The Committee therefore welcomes the recent announcement of the Government's New Enterprise Allowance, which was announced during the writing of this Report.<sup>52</sup> This will mean that people will now have instant access to business support when they claim Jobseekers Allowance, ending the current six month long wait, and jobseekers will also have instant access to a business mentor. However, given the demand from Black women, along with the barriers they face, the Committee is keen for this new policy to closely monitor developments by gender and ethnicity combined. This would be an important step in ensuring that Black women – as well as women from other disadvantaged groups – are not being overlooked or missing opportunities.

**Recommendation 15:** The Government should consider monitoring the impact of its New Enterprise Allowance on ethnic minority women, as well as on other groups.

**Recommendation 16:** The Government needs to ensure its New Enterprise Allowance takes into account the needs and talents of older newly unemployed professional women by monitoring and publishing data on these groups.

### Government's Access to Finance Review

6.15. The Committee supports the Government's Access to Finance review, which aims to look at bank lending practices to ethnic minority businesses and start ups. Some Black women interviewed as part of our inquiry identified bank lending practices as a problem in relation to their own ambitions to set up a business, adding that they feel as if banks perceive Black women

as 'lazy' with 'bags of children'.<sup>53</sup> One woman interviewed in Tottenham said:

*The banks do not see black ethnic women as viable business owners; they think we cannot make any money. This is completely wrong.*

6.16. The Committee notes evidence submitted by the Runnymede Trust, also submitted to the Access to Finance review, which recommends that banks and building societies should disclose who they lend to, as well as whose applications they reject, on the basis of ethnicity, gender and postcode. Even if this data is not made public, it should at the very least be disclosed to the Treasury and the relevant regulatory agency. This, Runnymede argues, would allow the Government to understand who is being denied credit and where. This is necessary not simply as a matter of justice, argues Runnymede, but will also help determine underserved locations where businesses might grow, thus potentially boosting the economy and improving employment.

**Recommendation 17:** The Government's Access to Finance Review should consider recommending that banks disclose who they lend to by ethnicity, gender and postcode. This will help determine whether ethnic minority women, as well as other groups, are being disproportionately denied credit.

6.17. As highlighted in the section above, the Committee believes that it is important that those who want to set up their own businesses are given every opportunity possible, and that barriers are removed.

### The Work Programme

6.18. The Committee wanted to focus on how effective the Work Programme has been in increasing employment of ethnic minority women. However, we received little evidence on its impact. Indeed, one Work Programme provider declined to participate in an oral evidence session for the inquiry because it believed that it did not have enough data 'to have something insightful to say', despite administering the programme in two very diverse areas.

6.19. The Committee is also concerned that very limited data has yet been published on the Work Programme, and also fears that some Work Programme providers may not even be collecting

51 Tottenham and Manchester evidence sessions

52 <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/newsroom/press-releases/2012/oct-2012/dwp106-12.shtml>

53 Tottenham evidence session

data on ethnicity. The Committee welcomes the Government's plan to publish the first official data on the Work Programme in November 2012, but is concerned that information on the evaluation of the Work Programme will not be available until 2014.<sup>54</sup>

**Recommendation 18:** Data on the impact of the Work Programme on ethnic minorities, including ethnic minority women, needs to be collected and published if this has not taken place by the publication of this report.

### English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) provision

6.20. The Committee believes that ESOL provision, which provides English language support for speakers of other languages, is a crucial government initiative which plays a key role in breaking down language barriers to employment. As highlighted in Paragraph 4.27 and Section 5 above, many women from Pakistani, Bangladeshi and some Black African backgrounds face language barriers, and ESOL is an important tool in helping them overcome this. The Committee therefore welcomes the Government's decision in February 2012 to extend ESOL provision.<sup>55</sup> However, whilst ESOL was highlighted as an important and useful service in evidence submitted, a number of witnesses argued that the service received is not currently as effective for women as it could be.

6.21. Our evidence session in Manchester highlighted a number of barriers, including high fees, long waiting lists for classes and not enough places to meet demand. In addition, The London Borough of Tower Hamlets expressed concern around the short term yearly funding arrangements for organisations providing ESOL, arguing that this insecurity and possible change of providers does not provide the continuity needed for the students.<sup>56</sup>

6.22. In addition, women working on these issues in Manchester identified a number of barriers specifically facing women in relation to ESOL classes, which mirror the findings of 2009 research by Quilliam, submitted as evidence for

this inquiry.<sup>57</sup> Women in Manchester argued that currently ESOL provision can be unattractive to women as many would prefer to be taught in women-only classes taking place in familiar community venues rather than formal learning settings such as colleges.<sup>58</sup> This was also highlighted as important because community venues are often more easily accessible as they are more likely to be in residential areas, which means that women feel safer travelling to and from classes. Classes run by community projects for example were highlighted as being very popular, although these were said to be decreasing in number due to funding cuts. In addition, most significantly for women, it was stated that class timings often clash with school drop-off and pick up times and very few classes offer a crèche service for women with small children.<sup>59</sup>

**Recommendation 19:** ESOL providers need to look into providing services more suited to women's needs, particularly taking into account the need for childcare provision and family-friendly class times.

6.23. There were also concerns around whether current ESOL services are effective enough in teaching women English. The London Borough of Tower Hamlets mentioned that almost all non-English speaking women arriving in the borough as adults accessed some form of ESOL training but some had failed to be proficient in the English language despite having studied it for a number of years.<sup>60</sup> In addition, as highlighted by Quilliam, services sometimes do not take into consideration the level of literacy of women in their own language, particularly given that Bangladeshi, Pakistani and especially Somali women have low literacy levels in their mother tongue.<sup>61</sup> In addition, women interviewed in Oldham mentioned that many ESOL classes offered to local women required a certain level of English before enrolling, which was not suitable for many women they knew.<sup>62</sup> As a solution to this, Quilliam and NIACE suggest in their evidence that pre-course provision could help lower skilled women before entering a mainstream ESOL course.

54 As stated by former Employment Minister Chris Grayling on 10 July 2012 in the House of Commons: <http://www.theyworkforyou.com/wrans/?id=2012-07-10a.116413.h&s=%22work+programme%22+data+2014#g116413.r0>

55 <http://www.communities.gov.uk/news/corporate/2097253>

56 London Borough of Tower Hamlets evidence

57 Quilliam and Manchester focus group

58 Manchester session

59 Manchester session

60 Tower Hamlets evidence

61 See evidence from Quilliam and Tower Hamlets

62 Oldham session

**Recommendation 20:** Pre-courses should be introduced in areas of high need and demand to help women who are struggling in mainstream ESOL provision.

6.24. Quilliam also made the suggestion that more ESOL courses should be specifically linked to employment, citing examples of provision in Harrow and East Berkshire which had courses focused on ESOL in the workplace. They argue that these combined courses would be useful given the need of those women who have been out of the labour force for considerable periods of time to learn, for example, basic IT skills.<sup>63</sup> This mirrors concerns cited throughout the inquiry regarding the difficulties in getting older Bangladeshi and Pakistani women into work, and more work focused ESOL courses could help begin to solve some of these problems.

**Recommendation 21:** The Government should look at ways to encourage more work-focused ESOL classes for those who want them. This could involve course syllabuses being linked to vocational information, as well as a link to job searches.

6.25. It is however also worth highlighting that work-focused ESOL courses are not for everyone, and there is evidence that some women prefer to learn solely for social reasons, to read to their children or engage more effectively with local services.<sup>64</sup> These women should not be forced into work focused ESOL classes if they are not intending to learn English for this reason.

## Apprenticeships

6.26. Given that apprenticeships have been highlighted by all three main political parties as potential solutions to high levels of youth unemployment, the Committee was keen to determine whether this policy is working for ethnic minority women.

6.27. At the start of the inquiry, the Committee was made aware of data regarding apprenticeship starts and completed apprenticeships, broken down by ethnicity.<sup>65</sup> Data was not provided by ethnicity and gender combined as this is

not publically available, an issue which will be elaborated in Paragraph 6.30 below. The data shows that only 9.2% of those starting apprenticeships, and only 8% of those competing apprenticeships, are from an ethnic minority. This is despite the fact that approximately 16% of 16–24 year olds are from a minority ethnic background.<sup>66</sup> These figures are particularly shocking when taking into account the high unemployment rates of ethnic minority young people, with 44.4% of economically active young Black people and 33.6% of young Pakistani/Bangladeshi people being unemployed.<sup>67</sup>

6.28. When questioned on these figures at the first inquiry oral evidence session, Clare Bonson of the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) stated that the numbers of ethnic minorities on apprenticeship schemes are growing 'absolutely and proportionately', adding that for Asian people this has increased from 9390 to 19,270 and for Black people it has increased from 6390 to 14,610. She added that 10% of apprenticeships in London are now taken up by ethnic minorities.

6.29. The Committee welcomes the fact that apprenticeship numbers have grown, but given the high levels of ethnic minority young people who are unemployed we are concerned that these figures are not growing enough. The Committee is also concerned that the NAS is measuring success based on 2001 Census figures. The proportion of ethnic minority young people has substantially increased since 2001, which will be apparent once the latest census data is released in 2013. In addition, given that the non-white ethnic minority population of London is now over 30% (ONS, 2009), with a figure potentially even higher for young people, the Committee is concerned that 10% ethnic minority apprenticeships in London does not offer enough progress. The Committee does however note that the NAS's apprenticeship diversity pilots are a step in the right direction, which will be dealt with in more detail from Paragraph 6.32 below.

6.30. Some members of the APPG expressed disappointment that apprenticeship start and completion figures are not broken down by ethnicity and gender combined, to which Clare Bonson highlighted that these figures are owned by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, meaning that NAS are unable to release these figures.

63 See evidence from Quilliam

64 See evidence from Hopscotch

65 Data provided by Runnymede Trust based on information from the Data Service: [http://www.thedataservice.org.uk/NR/rdonlyres/F216A08B-03B2-44BC-A0EA-3F64F08A01CD/0/March2012\\_Apprenticeship\\_Achievements.xls](http://www.thedataservice.org.uk/NR/rdonlyres/F216A08B-03B2-44BC-A0EA-3F64F08A01CD/0/March2012_Apprenticeship_Achievements.xls)

66 As above

67 ONS 2012, Runnymede briefing

6.31. In light of this, the Committee believes that the fact that these figures are not in the public domain encapsulates how many government initiatives do not either record or publicise data on the impact of their services on ethnicity and gender combined. Collection and publication of this data is crucial if we are to find solutions to high levels of ethnic minority female unemployment. As this inquiry has shown, Black, Bangladeshi and Pakistani women face specific challenges and it is important to know what is effective and not effective in meeting their employment needs.

**Recommendation 22:** The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills should make public its data on apprenticeship starts and completions based on ethnicity and gender combined. In addition, the Government should record and publish data on the impact of its employment initiatives on ethnic minorities and women separately, as well as combined where available data allows.

**Recommendation 23:** All government employment programmes and policies should monitor and publish data on take-up and success, by ethnicity and gender separately, as well as combined where available data allows.

6.32. Since the Committee heard evidence from the NAS, the evaluation of the Government's diversity pilots was published. This scheme involved 16 pilots taking place across England which undertook trial activities aiming to increase demand for, and supply of, apprenticeships among under-represented groups, including ethnic minorities.<sup>68</sup> We welcome the work undertaken as part of the pilots to improve take up of apprenticeships by ethnic minorities in specific localities, and also welcome the shift from the Government to move towards recognising that different approaches for different groups may be needed in reducing unemployment, rather than a colour-blind approach.

6.33. The Committee notes the Evaluation Report's finding that the apprenticeship message is not reaching minority ethnic communities, as well as its conclusion that different communities face different barriers and needs, and consequently would need tailored solutions. The pilots' numerous examples of good practice of how to overcome these issues was also welcome, as was its conclusion that

a long term 'consistent and concerted effort' is required to tackle the issues facing diverse groups.

6.34. The Committee notes that the work of the pilots has now come to an end, and is concerned that there is currently no clear indication of how this work and the report's conclusions will be continued and implemented going forward. The Committee does however note and welcome the NAS's intention to embed the good practice of the pilots into its work going forward, and we hope that they will pay close attention to the specific needs of ethnic minority young people as outlined in the evaluation Evaluation Report.

**Recommendation 24:** It is positive that the National Apprenticeship Service intends to embed diversity good practice throughout its services in due course. We would urge them to also address specific needs of ethnic minority women in its diversity initiatives going forward.

## 7. Impact on Families

7.1. Our inquiry found that unemployment certainly has a negative impact on individuals, with many interviewees reporting increased low self esteem, frustration and a feeling of powerlessness over their own situation.<sup>69</sup> However, the Committee was also particularly keen to determine the impact that unemployment has on families.

7.2. At the simplest level, if less people in the family are working it means that there is less money available to provide for the family and its dependants. This is particularly concerning for Pakistani and Bangladeshi families, who experience extremely high poverty and child poverty rates, but it is also a concern for Black families, in which women are more likely to be the sole breadwinner.

7.3. Of particular concern are the large numbers of Black families which have one parent, which is usually the mother. As mentioned earlier in this report, 59% of Black Caribbean women and 43% of Black African women are lone mothers. If these women are finding it difficult to find work, this will have an impact on their families. One woman stated:

68 [http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk/Partners/Policy/~/\\_/media/Documents/NASEvaluationofDiAPilotsFinalReport%202.ashx](http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk/Partners/Policy/~/_/media/Documents/NASEvaluationofDiAPilotsFinalReport%202.ashx)

69 More personal stories are featured in the accompanying short film to this report

*As an [unemployed] mother it's hard. It does not make you feel good that your kids need stuff and you can't provide for them.* (Black woman, Tottenham)

7.4. It is also important to add that in addition to the high unemployment rates of Black, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women, men and young people from these groups also have high unemployment rates. Women spoken to as part of the inquiry suggested that this can have a devastating impact on the availability of wider financial support from other family members, whether in the home or within the extended family. One woman compared the current situation unfavourably to the recession of the 1990s:

*In the 1990s, although there was a recession, there was more family support because more people in the household were working. In this recession you have brothers, sisters, aunts and uncles all not working... there is no support anymore.* (Black woman, Tottenham)

7.5. Some lone mothers interviewed as part of this inquiry also highlighted how being unemployed makes them feel as if they are a bad role model for their children and other women in their community. Some mentioned that they are finding it difficult to convince their children to go to university given that they themselves are unemployed despite having a university degree.<sup>70</sup> Others suggested that their children took their advice on education and careers less seriously due to the fact that they are unemployed.<sup>71</sup> One interviewee argued that large numbers of unemployed women can lead to a dearth of female role models in families:

*The young ladies are aspiring to [be like] 'Nicki Minaj' because us as women have no work for the young ladies to say 'wow my mum is doing that or my auntie is doing that'... If we were working we [could] stop the young girls having more children and wanting to stay on the dole... If you don't have a job... then how will [we] be able to get people off the streets and into work?* (Black woman, Tottenham)

7.6. What is therefore clear is that unemployment not only has a negative impact on individual women, but also has a negative impact on the younger generations. If the sons, daughters, nephews and nieces see women in their family out of work this may well have an impact on their

educational and job aspirations. In addition, if less people in the family are working, children and families are more likely to fall into poverty.

## 8. Conclusions

8.1. It is clear from this inquiry that Black, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women have unacceptably high levels of unemployment which have persisted for over three decades. Urgent action is needed to address this in order to ensure this issue does not persist for a further three decades. This requires bold and targeted action from the Government and employers which is far more sophisticated than a simply 'colour-blind approach'. As stated by Professor Anthony Heath during his evidence, a 'colour-blind approach' has not worked in the past, so why would it begin to work now?

8.2. What is also clear is that Black, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women face specific barriers in the labour market which are not solely based on just their gender, or just their ethnicity. These women experience barriers because they are ethnic minority women, and data collection and policy approaches need to acknowledge this.

8.3. Finally, throughout the inquiry witnesses and those interviewed were adamant in stating that racism still exists in the UK, and evidence and personal testimony collected backs up its existence. There was a perception of many individual women interviewed in the inquiry that the Government – as well as what they saw as the 'establishment' – believe that racial discrimination has been solved, or that they simply do not care about its existence. The Government needs to work to correct this assumption and ensure that its policies speak to and meet the needs of ethnic minority women in the UK.

<sup>70</sup> Manchester focus group

<sup>71</sup> Manchester focus group

## 9. References

Work and Pension Committee (2012) *Youth Unemployment and the Youth Contract*, London: House of Commons.

Rose, E.J.B. (1969) *Colour and Citizenship: A report on British Race Relations*: London: Institute of Race Relations.

Li, Yaojun (forthcoming) *Ethnicity and public sector employment during the current recession*, Manchester: University of Manchester.

Bunglawala, Zamila (2008) *Valuing Family, Valuing Work: British Muslim Women and the Labour Market*, London: Young Foundation.

Sims, Jessica Mai, (2008) *Not Enough Understanding: Student Experiences of Diversity at UK Universities*, London: Runnymede Trust.

Kerr, Sandra et al. (2011) *Race into Higher Education: 2011 Update, Race for Opportunity*, London: RfO.

Cabinet Office (2012) *Opening Doors, Breaking Barriers: A Strategy for Social Mobility*. London: Cabinet Office.

## 10. Evidence Submitted

The APPG would like to thank all those who submitted evidence as part of this inquiry, as well as those who provided informal advice and support throughout the inquiry. Evidence submitted is as follows:

### Oral evidence

#### Evidence session 1:

- Professor Anthony Heath: Oxford University;
- Zamila Bunglawala: Fellow, the Young Foundation;
- Collette Cork-Hurst: National Officer for Equalities, Unite;
- Clare Bonson: Head of Business Development and Support, National Apprenticeship Service (NAS);
- Daniel Mokades: Rare Recruitment;
- Cynthia Masiyiwa: Active Horizons.

#### Evidence session 2:

- Noor Ali: Lead Ethnic Buyer, Morrisons;
- Yvonne Coghill OBE: Senior Programme Lead, Leadership for Equality, NHS Leadership Academy;
- Sandra Kerr OBE: National Campaign Director, Race for Opportunity;
- Professor Monder Ram OBE: Professor of Small Business and Director of the Centre for Research in Ethnic Minority Entrepreneurship (CRÈME), De Montfort University.

#### Local evidence sessions:

- Focus group in Oldham: Discussion session with six women;
- Focus group in Tottenham: Discussion session with four women;

Focus group sessions held in Manchester, organised with Oxfam: 23 women attended. Some had attended as individuals whilst others attended on behalf of the following organisations:

- Cheshire PCT
- Dewa
- Dynamic Ladies of Greater Manchester
- Equality and Human Rights Commission
- Greater Manchester African Communities
- Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue

- Lancashire Women's Network
- Manchester BME network
- Migrants Supporting Migrants
- Network for Europe
- Northern Refugee Centre
- Pulling Together Asian Womens Group
- Rainbow Haven
- Saheli
- Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council
- Tameside Third Sector Coalition
- Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council
- Union Street Media Arts project
- Westwood and Coldhurst Women Association
- Women's Solidarity Forum
- Wonderfully Made Women

lending disclosure, as previously sent to the Department for Communities and Local Government)

- Tower Hamlets Council
- ZHQ Consultancy
- Ziwo Zimbabwe Women
- Five anonymous personal submissions

This evidence, along with recordings and notes of oral evidence sessions, and summaries of focus groups, will be available at <http://www.runnymedetrust.org/projects-and-publications/parliament/appg-2/appg-inquiry.html>

#### Written evidence:

We received written evidence from the following individuals and organisations:

- BECTU
- Black Women's Health and Family Support
- Bradford Metropolitan District Council
- The Daycare Trust
- The Equality and Human Rights Commission
- The Ethnic Minority Advisory Group (EMAG)
- Equanomics UK
- Friends, Families and Travellers
- Professor Anthony Heath (follow-up submission on affirmative action in Ireland)
- Professors Anthony Heath and Yaojun Li (follow-up submission on Somali unemployment)
- Anya Hart Dyke, former Quilliam employee (Evidence submitted was a report written for Quilliam: *Immigrant, Muslim, Female: Triple Paralysis?* by Anya Hart Dyke and Lucy James, 2009)
- Hopscotch
- Jan Trust
- Professor Yaojun Li (follow up submission on Pakistani and Bangladeshi female unemployment)
- Micah Challenge
- ESOL Programme, NIACE
- Northern Homeworking Project
- One North West
- Runnymede Trust (submission on bank

**The Runnymede Trust**

7 Plough Yard, London, EC2A 3LP

**T** 020 7377 9222

**E** [info@runnymedetrust.org](mailto:info@runnymedetrust.org)

Registered in England 3409935

Registered Charity 1063609

**[www.runnymedetrust.org](http://www.runnymedetrust.org)**