Engaging with diverse communities

Time to Change is committed to ensuring that all communities benefit from a reduction in mental health discrimination. There is a focus on involving people from diverse communities throughout the programme, including strategic development and decision making as well as delivery. Time to Change recognises that stigma and discrimination vary across groups and communities, and that cultural context will affect the way that communities talk about mental health and engage with people with mental health problems.

Working with Black and Minority Ethnic communities

The effective engagement of Black and Minority Ethnic communities was reviewed in the second year of the programme. The purpose of the Diversity Review, part of which was led by Lived Experience Advisory Panel (LEAP) members, was to establish the extent and impact of work with Black and Minority Ethnic and LGBT communities in particular.

The Diversity Review led to a series of recommendations, and as a consequence there was additional investment in research and activity with people from Black and Minority Ethnic communities.

Pilot campaign in South Asian community
In order to learn more about using social marketing to tackle stigma and discrimination within a specific Black and Minority Ethnic community, a pilot Time to Change campaign was delivered in partnership with the South Asian community in Harrow, North West London in 2011.

Initial research revealed that there are particular issues of shame, fear and secrecy surrounding mental health problems in this community. The messaging focused on dispelling myths and misunderstandings around mental health, and activity included local cultural events, discussion groups, press advertorials in local and Asian titles, and free materials distributed to GP surgeries, pharmacies and community centres. Leaflets and posters were produced in Gujarati, Urdu, Hindi and Tamil translations, and real people's stories featured in local papers such as the Harrow Observer and Harrow Times. Two reports are available on this work, one on the research used to develop the campaign and the other on the impact and learning from the campaign.

Open Up
The Open Up project funded initiatives led by people with mental health problems to challenge mental health stigma and discrimination in local communities across England. There was a target of 25% to be delivered within marginalised communities. Six of the 28 projects (21%) were Black and Minority Ethnic-focused. Examples include:

Khamoshi (meaning 'cocoon'): Harrow, London
A play was written and performed in Hindi and English by a group of Asian women. It tackles mental health and domestic violence in the South Asian community, and the stigma that surrounds these issues. The play has been widely performed and a DVD has been made, which is still used for training across many mental health and voluntary sector organisations.

Maat Probe Group: Sheffield
Research was conducted by a group of African and African Caribbean men into the discrimination they face from mental health service providers. The group continues to use the findings to train mental health professionals on how to deliver culturally appropriate services.

The Well: Birmingham
This was a befriending and peer support group for Asian women with post-natal depression. The project used befrienders who represented the community they were working with, something which had been highlighted as important through a pilot group. Aspects of the Open Up project have been incorporated into the second phase of Time to Change.

Education Not Discrimination (END)

The END project piloted mental health stigma and discrimination training with professionals. The project's work with staff from GP surgeries included a focus on issues for people from Black and Minority Ethnic communities. Involvement Workers (people with experience of mental health problems) from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds helped develop the training content and deliver sessions. There was an interactive presentation on myths and facts and a role-play relating to mental health and Black and Minority Ethnic issues.

Reviewing diversity

Towards the end of the first programme a review was commissioned to look at the impact from activity in the first programme and plans for the second programme to engage with people from Black and Minority Ethnic communities.

The reviews showed that while there was a high level of policy knowledge around diversity and commitment to inclusiveness at senior levels across the partner organisations behind Time to Change, this did not automatically filter down to all project planning delivery and evaluation. In the first phase the programme developed learning resources and delivered training workshops to share existing good practice within the programme and externally.

As a result of the end of phase one review further changes have been made, and the recommendation that the first priority audience in the second programme from Black and Minority Ethnic audiences is the African Caribbean community has been adopted.

A position statement details previous work and current plans to address mental health stigma and discrimination with Black and Minority Ethnic communities, and learning. For more information, [take a look online](#).

Working with lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) communities

In the first phase Mind in Brighton and Hove ran a project with a local and national reach called MindOut with a specific focus on mental health stigma and discrimination experienced by people from LGBT communities. The Brighton project produced articles and adverts in the LGBT press, organised national and local events

and ran stalls at LGBT Pride events across England. They also delivered talks and workshops at conferences around the country and delivered LGBT awareness training for mental health professionals. Open Up also funded a project challenging mental health discrimination towards LGBT people in Bournemouth.

Although MindOut is no longer a Time to Change project, their work continues: more information can be found online.

Lessons learnt

Harness the credibility and knowledge of communities
Being able to fund local groups and individuals to undertake relevant and culturally appropriate anti-stigma activities within their own communities enabled the messages and empowerment work to reach a wider range of communities in an effective way, to complement the national work.

Working with individuals and groups with knowledge of and contacts with particular communities strengthened the Time to Change programme. Whether this was having a programme-wide workshop facilitated by someone with experience in diversity, or making links with national organisations like Stonewall, the expertise of others helped shape the work and made it more effective.

Use the knowledge of staff
As the programme was diverse and wide-ranging, staff knowledge and expertise was also a rich resource for good practice and shared learning. Many of the community projects had examples of very localised work they had done with diverse communities that could be shared; where projects had a focus on an area of diversity, this was particularly helpful. Programme-wide meetings were a great opportunity to bring project staff together to consider issues of diversity, potential barriers faced by diverse communities, and good practice.

Be aware that people have different understandings of diversity
Contextualising diversity and explaining the reasons behind the need to prioritise it helped projects do more about it. Some people understood about racial diversity but not sexual diversity, while others understood sexual diversity but not other types of diversity. For the programme as a whole, diversity meant acknowledging and understanding the impact an individual's identity has on their experience of mental health stigma and discrimination. Again, programme-wide meetings were a good place for these understandings to be discussed and examined.

Acknowledge limitations
Time to Change had a remit to challenge stigma and discrimination and needed to focus very clearly on bringing about the biggest possible change in the attitudes and behaviour of the general public. This meant using the language and definitions of partner organisations that ran the programme, and working within a framework of milestones and outcomes. Some supporters wanted Time to Change to challenge definitions, language and models of work, but this wasn't within the capacity of the programme. Managing expectations and acknowledging this was important.

Monitor diversity
Assuming that engagement of diverse communities is taking place is not good enough – it needs to be monitored. Monitoring not only highlights areas of concern, but also areas of strength and ingenuity. However, the effective monitoring across equalities strands remained a significant challenge for some projects.

Two reviews of diversity were carried out in the first phase, materials on good practice were produced and projects were asked to share case studies. As well as reviewing diversity formally, the Time to Change reporting templates asked projects to detail the communities they engaged with, as well as how they engaged those communities, but reviews of impact can only be as good as the data collected by projects.