



## **FINAL REPORT BME ENGAGEMENT PROJECT RYEDALE VOLUNTARY ACTION**

### **Purpose of report**

This report is in addition to the monitoring report which has been submitted to NYCC. The purpose is to outline the main achievements of the project for the Ryedale LSP Board and to advise them of the future plans of Ryedale Together. Ryedale Together's future activity and progress will be reported on through the Community Engagement priority reports.

### **Background**

The BME Engagement Project started in January 2007 and ended in March 2010. It was primarily funded through the NYCC Community Fund, with some additional funding from a variety of sources, including Safer Ryedale.

The project initially employed a polish worker who concentrated on the development of the Ryedale Welcome Pack and supporting individuals from the large influx of migrant workers who arrived in the District during 2007.

The NYCC Community Fund then funded a two year part time post for a BME Engagement Officer. This post was filled by Emily Murphy In September 2007. After the first year, Emily moved on to another role and the post was filled by Christine Bailey in December 2008. Both Emily and Christine were employed by Ryedale Voluntary Action but worked on behalf of the Ryedale Together BME Forum, which is a partner multi-agency Forum.

Equality and Human Rights Commission funding was applied for in 2009 in order to build on the success of the project and to develop a more BME led activity base of work. This bid was unsuccessful. In addition RVA applied for funds to support specific gypsy & traveller community work. Some of these applications are still outstanding but 4 have been rejected. NYCC Community Fund was applied for in 2010 to support an Officer post to help the development of a wider Equalities Forum under the same Ryedale Together banner. This bid was unsuccessful.

### **Main achievements of the project**

**Ryedale Welcome Pack:** Around 500 packs were printed and copies distributed directly through the project and also through partners. This pack was initially aimed at the polish community and was positively received by users. Police Area Commander's Commendation's were given to the two worker's on the project at that time for the development of the pack (Evalina Rooke and Emily Murphy) Through the BME Engagement Officer's (BME EO) attendance at the NYSP Action Learning Set and a presentation to County Councillors, the Ryedale pack greatly influenced the work that then resulted in the NYSP Welcome website. The BME EO then worked with Ryedale DC to develop the Ryedale element of the NYSP website. In Year 2, the pack was further distributed with the help and assistance of polish volunteers who worked with the BME EO, and all copies have now been delivered to people. The basic information was further developed into a BME BLOG site, which was designed and created by a polish volunteer who is a qualified webmaster. He worked with the BME EO to set up the BLOG and to develop content. The Ryedale BME EO was also responsible for ensuring that the Ryedale element of the NYSP Welcome website was kept up to date.

Beneficiaries of the actual printed Pack were residents from the Polish community. However, the NYSB site and the BLOG are used by a variety of people from different nationalities and there has been positive feedback from Ryedale BME people. The Ryedale BLOG received one hit per day over a monitored period of 3 months.

The Welcome Pack and website/BLOG provide basic information on where to find information which people require to access services and meet their various needs as citizens.

**Anecdote:** the pack was tracked with some recipients and one lady reported that she was still using the pack 3 and a half years after being given it. She is now settled and her family are with her and all employed.

**Work in schools:** Every school in northern and central Ryedale was visited as part of a promotion for a Polish/English cultural celebration event. The event was held at Ryedale Folk Museum. Activities included presentations at school assemblies to raise awareness of cultural differences, Polish songs being shared and performed and the sharing of arts and crafts traditions. There was effective and successful liaison between the Extended Schools service and the BME EO which continued to the end of the project.

Beneficiaries were the children in Ryedale who learned about other cultures, furthering their understanding; the people from the Polish community who took part in the event; people from the local native area whose awareness was raised about the Polish community who were living alongside them; partner agencies who contributed to the event by raising understanding and making direct links with the Polish community.

**Other events:** The BME project worked very closely with the Catholic Church during the first year and a half of the project to facilitate better links with the large influx of Polish workers. Coffee evenings after Polish Mass incorporated input from partners. There was also an evening event at Norton College and Asian and Turkish Culture days at Norton College. Partners who attended these events included NY Fire & Rescue Service, NY Police, domestic abuse team, schools and the libraries. Beneficiaries were the Polish community, Asian community, Turkish community and agency staff.

### **Employers Liaison**

Both BME EO's approached some of the main employers of people from BME backgrounds with some limited successes. In the latter half of the project, there was an Awareness Day held at Pro-pak, in partnership with the Fire & Rescue Service, which was appreciated by employees who were able to attend.

It would be true to say that employers were not open to the influence or suggestions from the BME project to allow greater development of initiatives.

### **ESOL classes**

ESOL classes provided important links to people who were settling in Ryedale from a variety of cultures. The BME EO's were able to make contact with people through informal attendance at these classes and then follow up any needs or individual issues that were raised.

### **Individual case work**

Both BME EO's established strong connections with many individual people. By the end of the project, a database of over 50 individuals had been compiled as a result. Many of these individuals were helped and supported with needs and issues, or signposted to other support agencies as appropriate. One of the additional outcomes from this was that a number of BME people went on to register with the volunteer centre and were successfully placed in local charities, further enabling their greater inclusion and integration into Ryedale. The BME project itself used a few volunteers to further activities: design and creation of the BLOG and distribution of the Welcome Pack.

Despite best efforts, many BME people were shy or unsure of their capacity and could not be persuaded to attend Forum meetings easily. However, the Polish person who designed the BLOG did attend 2 meetings and his input was very much appreciated.

**Anecdote:** a polish man was seriously ill in York District Hospital. He was about to be made homeless as a result of his not having paid rent due to his absence in hospital. He had no other family and the support agencies in Ryedale were not able to work out of Ryedale District boundaries to speak with him in York. The BME EO was able to visit him in hospital, speak with him in his native polish and establish his needs. His problems were resolved, he recovered from his illness and he went on to become one of our volunteers on the project.

### **Hate Crime Incident Reporting Centres**

The project, in close partnership with NY Police, was influential and active in helping to set up these centres across Ryedale. Voluntary and statutory agencies were approached by the project and an initial information and training event was facilitated in March 2009 at Ryedale House. A further launch and seminar event, with speakers from the Equality and Human Rights Commission and Stop Hate UK, was held later in October 2009. This event was highly successful and well attended, with an opening speech given by Cllr Keith Knaggs. A further training event was provided in Kirkbymoorside Library in March 2010 for new Centre's and for library staff. Ryedale now has 16 Hate Incident Reporting Centres with over 30 individuals trained to take reports. Funding for these events was granted from Safer Ryedale.

### **Gypsy & traveller community**

Specific inroads were made in building a positive relationship with the Tara Park community in order to ascertain any needs and issues, and to facilitate engagement with this community for the future. A community need was identified around having a children's play area. Funding has been applied for to endeavour to take this piece of work forward as a community led project: the Tara Park community would be supported to develop a community action group which could then work up a project and apply for funding themselves, in order to ensure community ownership and responsibility. This piece of work can only be taken forward if a community development worker post is funded and RVA is awaiting return from 3 out of 7 funding bids which are out to Trust funds. Four applications have been returned unsuccessful. This may, in part, be due to recessionary impacts on Trust funds.

### **Reporting and promotion**

The BME project has used the media and specialist Regional BME media to promote the work of the project, alongside making regular reports to Ryedale Together, Ryedale LSP Board and RVA Trustee Board. A number of press releases have been made, all receiving positive feedback.

### **Evaluation and monitoring**

There was a change of BME EO at the end of year one, which also coincided with a change of Chief Officer at RVA. An evaluation event was held with all partners from Ryedale Together (the BME Forum in Ryedale) in June 09, based on the original Action Plan and activities that had actually taken place.

As a result, the project was re-evaluated and a revised action plan drawn up. This followed an outcomes framework. Actions to achieve these outcomes were developed under 3 main strands of work:

- Engagement
- Representation & Influencing
- Promotion, monitoring & evaluation

An end of project evaluation day was also held, again involving all Ryedale Together partners (March 10).

For more detail, the following information is attached to this report for your information.

- Evaluation of project year 1 (June 2009)
- Final report from second half of project (March 2010)

Evaluation questionnaires and verbal dialogues were sent out and held. Although the returns from these were not sufficient to make any robust statements, out of the 5 partner agency returns made, 4 out of 5 agency staff reported that, as a result of the project, their organisation

was more aware of BME communities; 5 out of 5 reported that the needs of BME communities in Ryedale are better known and understood within their organisation; 4 out of 5 reported that they felt the needs of BME people in Ryedale are being met more effectively.

Eight individual people from BME communities also responded with comments about the project. The following are quotes taken from their feedback:

"I did have a look at the blog, looks good, I'm sure it will be useful for new arrivals in North Yorkshire."

"It was been very nice to know you and thank you for all your kindness and help[ful]"

Two project users took the time to answer set evaluation questionnaires. Both responders said that they were more aware of where to find help and information, felt more able to take a full part in life and felt they can influence what happens in Ryedale as a result of their contact with the BME EO.

### **Next steps**

The following issues, actions and ideas are some of the main points identified as a result of the evaluative process undertaken by Ryedale Together in March 2010.

- A lead partner is necessary to take forward issues and identify other partners to develop Ryedale Together (no one is currently funded to do this)
- There are huge barriers to engaging the BME community with local services
- Language remains the main barrier to engagement
- BME people are putting up with 'myths' about them on a daily basis
- Although local employers want to employ BME employees they appear not to be willing to invest in them (re training, time out for information days/language lessons etc)
- Information needs to be shared openly between partners and agencies
- Ryedale Together has developed positively over the last 2-3 years and is a good information exchange
- Ryedale Together has raised awareness of the diversity in our community amongst members and their organisations
- There is a need to develop more women's support groups
- A grassroots approach is required
- Volunteers or paid employees from BME communities to work with their own communities on community development, issues and needs is the key to moving forward
- The HI Reporting centres require more marketing

RVA has agreed to continue to facilitate and Chair the Ryedale Together Forum and support its move towards being a wider Equalities Forum. Administration of Ryedale Together is supported with Ryedale LSP funding and will be carried out by RVA in the form of minute taking and venue booking and provision of refreshments at meetings.

However, RVA is no longer funded to provide an Officer post to support actions and all partners recognise that this means each has to take more individual responsibility for actions within their own organisations and beyond.

Ryedale Together will continue to work towards growing its membership to reflect all equality strands, to develop a realistic action plan, to identify potential funding opportunities to further this action plan and to provide an effective sharing and information exchange role.

In addition Ryedale Together has agreed to be the Bronze PREVENT group for Ryedale.

### **Recommendations**

For Board members to note the content of this report