

Executive summary

- 1) The composition of the minority population of the County is not typical of the UK as a whole
- 2) The largest single group comprises the seasonal workers, mainly of eastern European origin (3000 at most¹), followed by Irish (slightly over 700) and other white groups (about 2000)
- 3) The next largest groups are Romany Travellers (estimated at 750), people who are mixed white and Asian (260), Chinese (210) and Indian (168)
- 4) Some groups can clearly be identified from being in similar employment, but most minority ethnic people will have individual and unique motives for being in the County, preventing any meaningful generalisations
- 5) Aside from seasonal workers, there are low numbers of minority ethnic staff in most workplaces, even at levels where recruitment is done on a national basis. The clear exception is Hereford hospital where close to 50% of medical staff are from ethnic minorities
- 6) Minority ethnic people identified what they liked about the County as: the countryside, the people and the low crime rate. There was no pattern in what they disliked
- 7) With the exception of Travellers and Jews, it would be misleading to speak of minority 'communities'
- 8) The relative absence of such communities and the proportion of the minority population with mixed backgrounds mean that any specific needs related to culture are not easily predicted
- 9) The minority ethnic population proved harder to access than anticipated
- 10) The Jews in the County report no negative features about their life in the area
- 11) Educational provision for Traveller children is long established and compares well with provision elsewhere (with the exception, some argue, of provision for any boys with behavioural difficulties)
- 12) Health provision for Travellers is prioritised to an unusual degree but could be better supported by the Council
- 13) There are some persisting issues about Council provision for Traveller sites and stopping places which seem to be 'on hold' but which could be resolved. In this respect policy is inconsistent and incoherent
- 14) Some Romany Travellers (whether housed or not) feel a persisting hostility towards them from neighbours and the police
- 15) Other issues to do with Travellers involved youth provision, confident handling of child protection, relationships between different groups of Travellers, contact and liaison with officialdom, economic vulnerability

- 16) As regards seasonal workers, there are tensions between the market forces acting upon farmers, the physical requirements of housing large numbers of workers and meeting other reasonable needs, and public unease about the workers' presence. Herefordshire is a specific local example of the impact of changes in the European economy and the increased mobility of the European (and global) workforce. These changes are clearly not welcomed by some but are not reversible
- 17) Chinese and Bangladeshi restaurateurs reported little of the late night racial abuse that has been reported elsewhere, though it does occur and is seldom reported because of perceptions of response time
- 18) Though individuals report significant, persisting and distressing incidents, many mentioning children as perpetrators, we did not obtain consistent evidence of visible minorities facing high levels of discrimination or prejudice. *These experiences are dependent on many factors and neither part this summary statement should be cited out of context.*
- 19) The police were generally regarded positively; clear steps have been taken to improve the recording of and response to racial crimes, though there is a feeling amongst some that there is little point in reporting such things
- 20) There is evidence of poor relationships and negative expectations between *some* police officers and *some* Travellers
- 21) Almost no schools have significant numbers of minority ethnic children; the largest single group represented anywhere being Travellers (making up 4% of one school roll). One primary school had 7% minority ethnic pupils in 2003
- 22) While some parents reported concerns most who commented felt schools had dealt well with racist incidents
- 23) There is no evidence of a pattern of experiences of key services related to specific ethnicities, i.e. no group emerges as being particularly dissatisfied
- 24) Health care was regarded very positively
- 25) Environmental Health, Social Services and housing were barely mentioned by informants, most having had no contact with public provision in these areas
- 26) There is evidence of a positive climate of concern in public institutions in the County to promote acceptance of diversity. We were struck on several occasions by the support and goodwill shown towards the research by key managers and those who controlled access to data. This was echoed by other indices of official recognition of and support for diversity in exhibitions and posters
- 27) There is no pattern of the local press sensationalising or over-simplifying issues of diversity