

# Gateway Portsmouth: Stakeholder Dialogue

## Introduction

The need to maintain an ongoing dialogue with representatives of ethnic minority organisations and partner organisations working with them, as well as project participants was identified at an early stage in the Gateway Project. The initial plan was to convene quarterly meetings, with such representatives and the participants in the project in order to share experience and address issues, as this did not prove feasible, other ways of maintaining dialogue were pursued, using semi structured interviews and focus groups. Dialogue is essential for several reasons:

1. It was important to design the project aims and processes meet the aims and objectives of new migrants and the organisations and services that support them. Initially we made assumptions about what these aims would be, however it was essential to refine this understanding by listening to the stakeholders and participants in the project.
2. A preliminary examination of the intended process and impact of the project - to enable new immigrant women from non EU countries to participate in Portsmouth Society as volunteers and by improving their capability in English, health, education and employment – also suggested potential unintended consequences. These included the possibility that existing organisations representing or supporting ethnic minority organisations might feel undermined or bypassed by the project.
3. Our Baseline Review showed the increasing diversity of non-EU immigrants to Portsmouth over the last ten years, with larger numbers of new immigrants from the Philippines, Zimbabwe, India, Nigeria and South Africa and comparatively few from Bangladesh and Pakistan. However, most participants in our project came from those groups with longer established communities in Portsmouth, this shows the key importance of updating links with newly formed community groups.
4. As the project has proceeded it has become apparent that the longer term sustainability of the project depends upon engagement with existing organisations and the development of new contacts with recent immigrants.
5. While our evaluation methodology applies quantitative values derived from wide ranging social and statistical studies it is important to validate such measures in terms recognisable in the qualitative descriptions of the experience of stakeholders and participants in the project. Thus focus group sessions were held to inform the evaluation of the project as seen by participants see Focus Group Outcome Report.



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## Methodology

The methodology employed in this project included an initial launch meeting with representatives of ethnic minority organisations and partner organisations. This attracted some 30 representatives from a variety of organisations and groups. The meeting introduced the project its aims and method of work. Feedback sessions encouraged participants to express their views on their priorities and the ways in which they could participate in the project.

This was followed up by discussions with representatives of the organisations representing or serving ethnic minority groups plus interviews with potential volunteers. Details of the methodology proposed for these discussions are set out in Annex A. In outline the intention was to first ask a series of open ended questions to prompt respondents to express their views on the project. These questions were simplified as far as possible to leave respondents free to express their views in their own terms. The interviewers were drawn from the Gateway support team including people who led relevant PCC services:

1. How could the project help you/your community/organisation?
2. How could you/your organisation work together with the project?
3. What you see as the most important things the project should do?
4. The main problems or barriers you/new immigrants face in understanding/contacting/participating in local services and community groups?
5. The best way of overcoming problems and barriers to integration?
6. Any other issues you would like to raise about the project?

Key points made by respondents were recorded and discussed in debriefing sessions. Following these initial dialogues further follow up sessions were organised to follow up on major issues including Health, Housing, Employment, ESOL and Community Safety. These interviews again used semi structured interview methods raising the interview schedules were designed for each issue but broadly covered the following points:

1. What are the main problems faced by people in your community (for this issue)?
2. How do your community members feel about (these issues)?
3. What are the barriers for your community (in getting help with this issue)?
4. Is your community able to benefit from the services currently available (for this issue)?
5. What would be the best way to overcome these barriers for your community?

Responses recorded during these interviews were reported using a thematic analysis approach (see Annex A).



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## Interviews

In total 30 interviews were conducted by face to face meetings by the project research team, 14 in the first category, dealing with general issues affecting communities and 13 in the second category following up on specific issues and 3 with potential volunteers. The organisations from which respondents were drawn are listed below, however, it is important to note that responses were personal views rather than statements of the views of the organisations.

- Cross Cultural Women's Group
- Portsmouth Gambian Association
- Ogroshor Women's Group
- Portsmouth Chinese Association
- You Trust Women's Services: Women's Refuge
- Job Centre Plus
- NHS Hampshire
- WEA Southern Region Omega Centre
- Social and Economic Regeneration: Southern Housing Group
- Sikh Welfare Association
- Havant Multicultural Forum
- Hindu Cultural Association
- Portsmouth Francophone Space
- Thai Solent Society
- Cheburashka (Russian Group)
- Highbury College
- Bangladeshi Welfare Organisation
- Chinese Lunch Club
- MaAfrique multicultural women's group
- Anglo Filipino Society
- Greater Sylhet Development and Welfare Council, Southeast Area

It is important to stress that in this conducting this dialogue we were not attempting to "sample a representative group" not do we claim that the personal views expressed the opinions of the organisations or the people they serve. It is simply a collection of relevant views designed to ensure ongoing contact, feedback and insight from other perspectives.



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## What We Learnt

### How could the Gateway project help your community/organisation?

Respondents were very positive towards the project, most mentioned the importance of addressing the isolation of new immigrant women. It was noted, for example, *“There is a real difficulty and isolation for many of our women”*. The project was seen as helping new immigrant women who *“don’t have links to the network yet”*, *“would be good to set up social groups for community, separate groups for men/women”*. Others noted the benefits of providing a route to education, employment and health advice: *“free qualifications”*, *“links to health trainers”*. The ethnic minority groups also saw potential advantages for them in *“getting numbers up”* and perhaps *“funding”*.

Potential volunteers also focussed on the importance of enabling links across groups *“It will help bring people of different cultures together, open their mind, help them integrate into wider society, language and background does not matter”*, *“help people to go to the right person, right place, set themselves up.”*

Negative comments focussed on the eligibility criteria for the project, excluding immigrants who had arrived more than ten years ago, refugees and men. For several organisations this meant that very few of their members would be eligible. Most of the organisations contacted represented well established immigrant groups, whereas some new immigrant groups identified by the Baseline Review, say from Nigeria were either less well engaged in community organisations or perhaps such organisations were not so readily known to us.

### How could you/your organisation work together with the Gateway project?

Several positive suggestions for working with the project or alongside it were put forward. There were offers to: *“refer volunteers”*, *“promote the project and contribute ideas”*, *“host events”*, *“participate in meetings”*, *“advocate for the project and distribute leaflets”*, *“go out to groups/communities to raise awareness”* and to *“contribute to (specialised) training”*. Some respondents saw the potential for working with the project by drawing on trained volunteers, for example at *“a weekly helpdesk at our clubhouse”*.

Suggestions for working alongside the project include the idea that the project might help those people beyond the scope of some existing schemes, *“we provide support, for employees only, not their families, this would fill that gap”*. There was also a hope expressed that regular meetings would improve communications with immigrant community members on issues like *“how to get on the property ladder and sickness and disability benefits”*.



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Potential volunteers also suggested that they could assist: *“help to organise events”, provide contacts, networks”, “help people do things together”, “advocate”.*

While there were many suggestions in practice few have as yet come into practice. This seems to underline both the importance and the difficulty of working with existing and perhaps newly forming immigrant community organisations.

### **What you see as the most important things the project should do?**

Responses to this question reinforced the message that new immigrants, particularly women, suffer from and isolation, lack of confidence stemming from lack of information. The most common issue raised in response to this question was the need to improve communication with new immigrants, *“befriending and educating our migrant community about what’s out there available to them in Portsmouth”, “provide health information, diet, food”, “information about the location of services, local transport”, “help immigrants learn basic things to get by, communication”, “being able to seek emergency advice, police, community centres”, “self-esteem, confidence”.*

The need to *“widen eligibility and target as wide a community as possible”* was often raised. The need for crèche facilities was also raised, and *“courses during week school time”*. The need to work with existing organisations was again raised”, and *“to listen to us (community organisations)”*, particularly in relation to sustainability of the project *“Have a strategy for the end of the project as it is only as good as its legacy”*. Specific suggestions included the idea of: *“programme group/ regular meeting invite community leaders along to distribute messages to communities”* and *“link to community organisations on a regular basis”*.

It appears that there is a need for further ongoing work with potential partners and perhaps some funding needed to support the sustainable continuation of the Gateway project.

### **The main problems or barriers you/new immigrants face in understanding /contacting/ participating in local services and community groups?**

Language was mentioned as the most important barriers to integration for most new immigrant women: *“free language classes”* are essential, *“people don’t know they have access to translators at GPs, dentists.. the same needs to be provided by the Council”*. This was often associated with *“lack of confidence in accessing support”* and sometimes *“frustration”, “prejudices from the white community may make them feel c\*\*p about themselves”* and a feeling of *“I can’t be bothered I’ll hide from it all”, “isolation”*



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*/marginalisation”, “fear of being looked down at because western countries are seen as more advanced”, “stressful events before and during migration, for example inadequate accommodation”, “difficulty in finding appropriate food” and possible “mental health issues” arising from these feelings.*

Potential volunteers, even those with well-established networks and connections felt: *“the feeling of being a foreigner”, “difficult to integrate with locals”, “feel cast aside”, “English people do not like people from outside the European Union”, “media is negative towards foreigners, makes me feel bad”.*

This suggests that it is the combination of language barriers, lack of links with both ethnic and other community organisations and inability to access social support services that are the main barriers to integration. Comments also demonstrate the negative feelings that can be generated by media commentary and lack of friendliness or understanding. The lack of self-confidence demonstrated by responses suggests that barriers were perceived as even more difficult and, coupled with pressure of adapting in a new country without much social support, could lead to social isolation and mental health problems.

### **The best way of overcoming problems and barriers to integration?**

Suggestions to overcome these barriers gain focussed on the need to improve communication with new immigrants, *“Asking migrants what they think and want and their issues. Do not make assumptions about their needs or barriers... listen to them”.* *“Identify new migrants and provide support directly- engagement”, “people need to be more empathetic to people’s (migrants) situations”, “Try to understand that the migrant is trying, is learning how to fit in”, “training in language and confidence”, “make people feel welcome”.* Specific comments referred to the need to explain services such as GPs, schools and Council services: *“Councils don’t have the same role”* in her home country.

Once again the importance of language classes for new immigrants was mention by many respondents. This was coupled with a call for training to make people aware of their rights and responsibilities *“Data Protection, Confidentiality, Counselling, Health and Safety these are new concept (to migrants) and they can get frustrated”.* Specific ideas included *“online language training”* (possibly coupled with community contact) and *“befriending”* of new immigrants on arrival (coupled with contact with community organisations and support for language and rights training).

Potential volunteers saw their role as: *“offering friendship”, “putting your heart in it”, “nice people to help are important”*



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## Any other issues you would like to raise about the project?

Respondents often returned to issues such as the need to extend eligibility to make the project more relevant to their communities and in particular to make the project more sustainable by enabling them (existing community organisations) to participate through local networking. The idea of support to migrants on first arriving in England or Portsmouth was mentioned by several respondents: *“there are offices about sight-seeing in the airport when you arrive in England, why not about public services?”*, *“make people feel welcome, for example by Council Officers”*, *“it would be useful to get information about council and health services when you arrive, a welcome pack!”*. Respondents also noted the need to ensure the project *“lasts for longer time”* and was provided in local and easily accessible locations”. One final comment was *“there is racial prejudice in the city”* (and this must be addressed).

## Health Issues

Health problems noted by respondent as relevant to their community included: *“heart disease, high blood pressure and diabetes”* and *“mental illness”*. Causes included: *“chewing betel nuts”* and *“smoking (amongst men)”*, *“difficulty in accessing services”* *“information about lifestyles is available but communities often don’t know how to access”*. This was ascribed to language barriers, lack of knowledge of services or of their rights to use services such as *“midwives”*. Understanding of health included: *“being able to do things, activity”*, *“living long enough to see grandchildren”*, *“being well fed”* *“traditional food is seen as healthy, life revolves around (family) meals”*, *“being happy and content”* *“mind and body”*. English food was often seen as unhealthy: *“to eat well, sleep well, look after yourself”*, required access to appropriate food. Health and wellbeing was also associated with religion.

The experience of migration was also identified as a source of stress *“Some homesickness and social isolation at the beginning”*, *“some people can get stressed because they have to financially support their family back home”*. Specific health issues associated with migration: *“it affects mental health, depression, missing family, homesick missing celebrating festivals, seasons, missing cultural bonds”*.

General health issues identified included: *“body culture colour of skin is important, small build, obesity is frowned on, being slim becomes more and more an ideal influenced by*



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western culture”, “stigma attached to skin problems and asthma”, “fear of mental and physical mental illness, being hereditary kept quiet because of arranged marriages”. “Female health problems are hidden, tend not to go to check-ups (smear tests and breast screening), “no knowledge around examinations”, “men are even worse at attending health check-ups”. And “sex is not talked about, no sex education in families”. Family relationship problems were rarely acknowledged: “some husbands are not very nice emotionally, there are arguments”, but “domestic abuse is not a problem”.

Physical health could be improved “more active here than in xxxx (where she could afford servants)”. On the other hand “health system is slow compared to (my home country, if you can afford private health care)”, “had a bad experience with care in the UK”. “If you don’t have private care in xxxxx there is no medical care” and from another ethnic group “the NHS can be very slow sometimes community members prefer to go back to xxxx for specialist treatment as health services there are faster”.

## Housing Issues

Housing issues were described from the perspectives of migrants from one country and from a group with members from different countries. “Most new migrants .. usually have relatives who provide temporary accommodation until they find their own place”. “It is difficult to find accommodation without advice from settled members of the community especially when someone has a language barrier”. “Renting is an issue because it may be expensive if a flat is rented through an agency”, “it can be difficult to get references and a credit check”, “easier to rent privately”, “difficult to pay deposits”, “for these reasons many new migrants sofa-surf at the beginning”. “Housing for families that have more than one child is difficult”. “(It is) difficult to find home (in same area) quickly after (marriage/relationship) split up”. “More established members of the community often are able to afford to have a property or even two or more, which they rent out”. Potential problems include: “without advice from community members new migrants would struggle to access available support.... because settled community members are aware of the available benefits, they know how to use them, many are receiving housing benefits”. “(It is a) problem that there is no fixed date for housing benefit payments”. “Nowadays it is becoming more difficult to access benefits.... this is a general trend not related to ethnicity”. There were both criticism and praise for current housing services in Portsmouth: ““(ethnic minority migrant) felt treated very disrespectful, unfairly and judgementally by housing staff”, “staff not well trained in customer care”, “Housing didn’t consider medical needs of family members”. On the positive side comments included: “Customer service relating to



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*housing (are) excellent and people are very helpful”, “complaints are handled quickly and solutions are found promptly”*. There were also negative and positive comments on the quality of housing, *“quality of housing is not good” “no flooring” “house in terrible condition, paint chipped no help from Council, no governance of house swapping”, “filthy house after house swap”*. But also: *“generally they are happy with the accommodation they possess”*.

Suggestions to improve services included: *“there should be an independent governing body for housing”, “people don’t know about service- housing officers only give a limited amount of information”, “individual officers make a big difference”*. *“Better training for customer services”, “more information and general concern for clients”, “forms are too complicated, make services accessible less red tape”, “language is a barrier”*

## Employment Issues

The responses to this issue were given by representatives of a migrant community organisations, and UK employers. Several comments noted: *“(people from my community) usually find jobs through relationships rather than official channels”*; *“jobs are mostly sought through agencies, less online or through job centre”*. Some groups found it difficult to get their qualifications recognised: *“(it is) difficult to get qualified jobs as qualifications (from overseas) are not recognised in UK”, “here you have to start from scratch with studying to work in a qualified job or take unqualified work”, “people don’t know where to go for employment related support, how to write a CV, don’t know about employment related courses or careers advice services”*. Other respondents reported that *“lack of skills is not a problem.. though lack of language knowledge skills to explain skills to employers”* (can be a problem).

Barriers include: *“language.. especially job related jargon”, “people don’t know where jobs are advertised”*, *“they lack knowledge as to how to fill in an application”, “there is lack of traineeships in the public sector which could be accessed by BME job seekers” “there may be no systematic discrimination but it happens in individual cases”*. Views of current employment services included: *“access to unemployment benefits works ok, but job centres force people into any job, people have to take up low skilled work, they are discounted by the system”*. *“People don’t feel discriminated against by the job centre as such but harassed to take up any job, not encouraged to use their skills and abilities”*.

Suggestions to address these problems and barriers included: *“promote jobs in community languages”, “assistance with job descriptions and person specifications”, “setting up a temporary register (of people and jobs, to support) for skill matches”, “employment related*



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*ESOL classes* “communication skills training”, “explaining what terms mean in community languages”, “support how to search for jobs in specific areas”, “explain how to use professional networks” and “placement opportunities in voluntary, statutory and private organisations”. This assistance should: “involve job centres in identifying training opportunities” and should also “involve (community organisations such as) local churches supported by ethnic community members”.

One group reportedly “don’t find they have problems finding work, they don’t have problems with CVs and job applications” for another group while “lack of English can be a barrier for some people...family usually helps with finding and applying for jobs”. Neither reported problems in accessing health or other services, or using services provided by men. In one community most members were Muslim but “they don’t have problems with carrying out prayers or fasting during employment”.

## ESOL

Responses regarding ESOL (English for speakers of other languages) were provided by members of ethnic community groups and providers of ESOL services. As noted in the general responses to Gateway, access to ESOL classes is a major issue for non-English speaking ethnic communities: “through linguistic barrier, unable to make acquaintances with ;local residents other than their own community, feeling isolated”. It is particularly difficult for women because in many cases they were joining their husband who either learnt English through work or was already proficient. Many ethnic minority women found lack of English a major barrier to integration, to understanding services and rights and to finding their place and self-esteem in Portsmouth society. One organisation represents a community of migrants in which “many come to England with little or no English, for example, through marriage”, in another, “many community members have problems with written English more than spoken”. “Men often find it easier to learn English as they go out to work.... women who stay at home find it more difficult” Three respondents noted that : “the community does not find it very easy to find out about ESOL classes”, “there is a lack of information about classes”, “information about courses is available online, other sources would be recommendations from friends, less information through council, job centre or official institutions”. “Community members help other members to overcome linguistic barriers, they often assist their friends or family who do not speak English”, “they are not aware of available help from outside their community”.

One group saw funding and childcare as a barrier to ESOL classes, another did not “funding and childcare (to enable attendance at ESOL classes) can be an issue” but “if people make



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*learning English a priority they usually manage to cover the cost”, “cost of attending classes is not a problem if it is reasonable, however, preferable no cost at all”. Some also found childcare a problem but others did not “timing of classes can be a problem”, “people have extended families locally to look after children”. For one group “female teachers are preferred male teachers are acceptable”. The other respondents noted no preference.*

The difficulty of dealing with official documents and letters was noted by respondents who commented: *“help is found through friends and neighbours as well as older children” “not aware of other ways of getting help with letters”, “trying not to get involved into situations where they would have to write an official letter”.*

Service providers noted the importance of: “promoting employability skills” and “providing ongoing work placement after training”. They also felt that: “Portsmouth has a lot better community relationships than other authorities”.

## Community Safety Issues

Community safety is an issue raised in discussions at our launch event and in subsequent discussions with participants in the programme. Points raised include feelings of insecurity in moving around areas of Portsmouth, threat from neighbours and people who are drunk. A follow up interview with a representative of an ethnic minority organisation noted: *“staying safe is very important for our community...Portsea is considered as a bad area as are some areas of Fratton... and Guildhall Walk”. “I decided to relocate due to the abusive behaviour of teenagers who used to throw food (at the house windows)”. “Women are staying at home in the evening and rarely go out due to safety”. When asked if feelings about safety were linked to their ethnicity comments include: “People (from my community) prefer to keep their distance from white people as they fear to be judged on”, “In these situations they try not to be in anyone’s way and do not get involved in arguments”. “They feel unsafe especially after terror attacks and incidents alike and they try to spend time at home until discussions quieten”. “There are two reasons why they feel more unsafe after such events: due to skin colour as most of the time there is no differentiation between nations and hatred is oriented towards all dark skinned people. Second reason – they feel unsafe themselves because they could become victims of such attack”.*

Though the respondent had experience of racial and or religious discrimination elsewhere this was not in Portsmouth. The responses include: *“no difficulty in accessing safety services...they call the police and they think it is very effective and understanding”. “However, other people (from the community) would probably keep the problem to*



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*themselves because they did not want to get into trouble or be approached by criminals after officer interaction". "Generally they (community members) appreciate help from the police and respect officers". "The service they provided was mostly described as excellent".*

When asked how integrated community members feel in Portsmouth responses include: *"Men are more likely to integrate to society than women...due to women staying at home". "Linguistic barrier stops people from integrating". "Newcomers feel very alien within the majority and need time to establish themselves and integrate. They tend to keep distance between themselves and other groups and if contact is not necessary they would not invite others to their community. However if they see that someone is friendly and interested in their customs and culture then they are invited and information is shared". "The community feels integrated when it comes to access to public services such as health, education, etc. However they would struggle to integrate when it comes to social life outside their homes and circle of friends"*

## Conclusions

Some of the themes that emerge from our dialogue are that social integration starts within communities: community organisations are a major resource for migrants and for the whole society of Portsmouth. Measures to develop peer to peer support for new migrants such as the Gateway Project can be valuable ways of improving and speeding integration. They enable people both to use existing public and voluntary services and community support and to contribute to them. Interventions that support early welcome to community, access to ESOL services and awareness of rights and obligations are highly valued.

The benefits of such peer to peer support were witnessed in relation to: health, housing, employment, ESOL and community safety, but most of all benefits came from alleviation from social isolation, loneliness and in some cases potential mental illness. While service providers need to do more to promote awareness of the support available, in most areas once accessed services were well regarded and it was clear that the individuals providing services could make a great difference through their personal understanding of the needs of the communities they serve. Gateway can offer participants a lifeline to social contact as well as addressing the needs of other people that they support.

Our dialogue also underlined the fundamental importance of English language and citizen rights and obligation training as a vital step in integration with the wider Portsmouth community. Language is not only a key to feeling at home but also a key to self-confidence.



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Again peer to peer support was a vital component of the Gateway project in this field. There was feedback on the need to reduce the eligibility constraints applicable to Gateway, but it was also made clear that women had specific needs beyond those of men in the communities served.

One important suggestion that arose from the dialogue was the idea of a “welcome pack”, providing information and access to support at the point at which new migrants arrive in Portsmouth. Working with existing community organisations and Gateway Volunteers could ensure that new migrants would feel supported and welcomed at their most vulnerable moment.

The fact that responses varied between individuals and different community support organisations highlights the need to continue to renew social networks and contacts to reflect the changing needs of new immigrants to Portsmouth. It also indicates the danger of generalising about the integration needs of all new migrants – each group has particular needs and expresses them in different ways. This may call for new initiatives, for example, to support new community leadership, to recognise and support new community organisations, to foster links between them and existing organisations and service providers and to develop different integration support strategies for different groups and individuals.

It also appeared that there is scope to build on existing mechanisms for listening to community organisations, to build peer to peer support, to ensure existing public and voluntary services are seen to respond to changing needs and to sensitize staff to varied local perspectives. These could be vital components in the development of sustainable next steps to build on the success of Gateway Portsmouth.



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# Annex A: Gateway Portsmouth Consultation with Stakeholders

## Introduction

While in the team and in discussions with the Expert Advisory Panel we can take a view on who might be Stakeholders in the project, meaning groups with engagement and interests in the project, we need to check this with them. Thus in our initial Social Impact Matrix we assumed that the Stakeholders include: new immigrant community members, potential community advisors, community organisations (including BME, locality and interest groups), Portsmouth City Council (as understood by Service Leaders), NHS Portsmouth (as seen by health providers and representative groups), the Home Office (as seen by project coordinators) and Employers. Thus at this stage we need to ask them how they might wish to become engaged with the project and what their specific interests are. This note has been updated following piloting by Uta Schmidtblaicher.

## Assumed Social Impact Matrix

Objectives > Stakeholders v	Improved social capital: bonding, bridging & Links	Rights, Language, Cultural knowledge, Safety & Stability	Markers: Health, Wellbeing, Education, Housing & Employment	Reduce long term social costs
1. New Immigrant Communities and STGs	Contacts, trust and support within & across groups & with services	Understanding of above and use of organisations and services	Reported health and wellbeing, Education attainment, Employment status,+ citizenship	Improved family income and prospects
2 Community Advisers	Reinforced community leadership	Skills Knowledge and confidence	Personal development of Community advocates + accredited qualification	Better employment opportunities
3. Community organisations	Increased membership & diversity	Representation of community group interests	Positive health and wellbeing social support	Greater viability of community organisations
4. Portsmouth City Council	Improved health and wellbeing reduced inequality	Appropriate delivery and use of services	As above plus feelings and actual security and reduced IMD differentials	Reduced social service costs
5 NHS Portsmouth	Improved health and reduced health inequality	Appropriate delivery and use of services	Health status and engagement with health specially for STGs	Reduced long term health costs
6. Home Office and Other Government	Improved integration	Steps to improve integration contacts, trust and citizenship	As all above plus increased recorded trust and steps to citizenship	Tax, and benefit and other impacts including CJS
7. Employers	Increase in appropriately skilled workforce	More diversity in the workplace	Better match of skills to available job opportunities	Economic performance

We have also formed our view of their likely goals and values, but we should not proceed without ensuring that we listen to their views and values. We can do this by open consultation at the launch of the project and by listening and recording their views and language. At this stage we don't even know what stakeholders might consider to be the most relevant questions so we need to use an open ended approach using semi-structured interviews. This very simply means introducing the project and some potential topics for discussion and then listening to the respondents, using open ended questions and prompts to move from one subject to another, feeding back what you have heard and always ending with a completely open question.



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## Designing the Semi Structured Interviews

While semi structured interviews are very simply a conversation it is always good practice to try out or pilot the interviews to check that the questions raised are appropriate, can be understood, and produce meaningful answers, so at first it would be good to undertake a few such informal interviews to make sure the process works. Key points in the interview include:

1. The introduction describing the reason for talking to the respondent and introducing the key points of the project. This needs to be consistent and brief but the first few pilots should check to ensure that the main points of interest to respondents are included.  
*E.g. As shown in the form, but if questions arise the more detailed description of the Gateway Process and Roles can help – but stress that at this stage we are still open to suggestions.*
2. The introduction of the topics to be discussed at this stage set out the areas you want to cover but let the respondent start on the issues that most concern them. You should not try to cover more than 6 areas.  
*E.g. I hope we can talk through the items listed in the form but respondents may wish to tell you their story so be prepared to listen first and follow up if necessary in an open conversation.*
3. The open ended questions if the respondent does not lead  
*E.g. So maybe we could now/start by talk about XX.. And your views on YY*
4. The prompts within question areas  
*E.g. So would you consider volunteering for such training.*
5. The recap summary that you provide:  
*E.g. So you would wish to emphasise the importance of ZZ*
6. The way the interview is recorded  
*While in an ideal world we might record interviews, I suggest just making notes of key points and language on the interview sheet. Do not disguise this make a point of recording key ideas e.g. Thanks that is a good point – I need to make a note of that.*
7. Follow up conversation  
*While the interview is intended to be open ended - to stress listening rather than asking questions, as it progresses you should explore particular issues and exchange views but only after you have listened to the respondent.*
8. Record and debrief to report back and reflect on what we have heard

## The Interviewees

This sort of interview does not rely on a statistical sample but it is important to cover a reasonable range of potential stakeholders. At this stage we hope to interview:

- 6 BME Community Organisation leaders
- 6 Potential Community Advisers (must be STG groups)
- 3 Other new immigrants
- 6 Service Leads (people who will provide access to specific advice and services)
- 3 Employers, 3 Other Government Services, 3 Other



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## A Semi Structured Interview Note

*My name is..... I can be contacted at .....*

I am working with Portsmouth City Council on the Gateway Portsmouth Project –this is a new project we are planning and we hope to get your ideas to help in the design of the project which is aimed at helping new immigrant women, young children, people over 65 and people with disabilities and to integrate with local communities who arrived in the last ten years - I was given your name by A as someone with an in depth knowledge of B. I am very grateful for the opportunity to listen to your ideas and suggestions for the project. I will take notes and pass on any points you make to my colleagues without mentioning your name – and only referring to your organisation in general terms.

The project is supported by the UK Home office and the European Integration Fund. It will recruit volunteers from the community and offer them training as Volunteer Community Advisors to help them to develop and pass on knowledge of local resources such as English Language classes and special support in areas like health, education employment, housing and safety and security. We hope Community Organisations will act as hosts for these Advisors and will suggest people who might welcome such training and places where advice could be given.

Can I first ask you to tell me a little about your group/ community and your experience of issues affecting the integration of immigrant communities in the Portsmouth area.

Can we discuss 6 main issues in any order you choose

1 How could the project help you/your community/organisation?	2 How could you/your organisation work together with the project?
3 What you see as the most important things the project should do	4 The main problems or barriers you/new immigrants face in understanding/contacting/participating in local services and community groups
5 The best way of overcoming problems and barriers to integration	6 Any other issues you would like to raise about the project



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## Follow up Conversation Points

<p>1 For new immigrants</p> <p>What are the key issues you face as a new immigrant?</p> <p>Have you or anyone in your family got special needs or problems?</p> <p>Does everyone speak English if not is this a problem?</p> <p>What contact do you have with local or national organisations and services? –what has been most helpful?</p> <p>Where do you find information – notices/ internet/newspapers/personal contacts</p> <p>What information advice or contact would you find most helpful?</p> <p>Who is best able to help you?</p>	<p>2 For potential Community Advisers</p> <p>Do you know of any services or support from the Council or voluntary organisations that have helped improve integration?</p> <p>Would you like to get involved as a Community Adviser –helping people make contacts and advising them how to get help?</p> <p>What sort of time commitment could you make to this?</p> <p>What sort of training would you need?</p> <p>How much time could you give to training?</p> <p>- Would 5 hours a week for 6 weeks be OK</p> <p>Would getting some sort of initial qualification help you in your career?</p>
<p>3 For existing Community Organisation leaders</p> <p>What community do you serve: ethnic/ religious/ common interests/ other?</p> <p>What sources are most relevant internet/ newspapers/ word of mouth?</p> <p>Could you identify people who would welcome training as voluntary Community Advisors?</p> <p>How could CAs help your community?</p> <p>Would your organisation consider hosting CAs?</p> <p>What sort of facility or opportunities for contact could you provide?</p> <p>Have you had experience of similar projects?</p>	<p>4 For PCC/NHS Service Leaders</p> <p>Do you know what special needs new immigrants have in relation to your services?</p> <p>What problems or opportunities do you have in communicating with new immigrants?</p> <p>How do you communicate with new immigrants? Do new immigrants have problems using your services?</p> <p>How could CAs help you to deliver services advice and information to new immigrants?</p> <p>How could they work with you by: contacts, signposting, referral or advocacy?</p> <p>Have you had experience of similar projects?</p>
<p>5 For Home Office/Other Government</p> <p>What immediate and long term issues arise for government in relation to new immigrant communities?</p> <p>How could better integration with local communities improve immediate and long term outcomes?</p> <p>How would you assess or measure the success of such efforts?</p> <p>What are the key differences that CAs could make?</p>	<p>6 For employers</p> <p>What issues arise in relation to employing or serving new immigrants?</p> <p>What sorts of skills and attributes are you looking for in new employees?</p> <p>How could CAs help in this regard?</p>



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## Record of the interview

This is a good example of how a simple record can be kept of the conversation from a pilot interview by Uta Schmidtblaicher

08/01/13 Interviewee: Health trainer, sessional worker at Chinese lunch club, member of cross cultural group & diverse carers group	
1. The aims Gateway could help you/your community/organisation achieve	Links to health trainer's service: advocates can refer to health trainers
2. How you/ your organisation could contribute to Gateway	Cross cultural women's group: some members of the group might be interested in becoming advocates
3. What you see as the most important things Gateway should do	Providing health information, diet, food, information about location of services, local transport, help immigrants to learn basic things to get by, communication, being able to seek emergency advice, police, community centres, self-esteem, confidence
4. The main problems or barriers you/new immigrants face in understanding/contacting/ participating in local services and community groups	Fear of being looked down at because western countries are seen as "more advanced", services not helpful and friendly, different attitudes can cause tension, people being judgmental, language, homesickness, neglecting themselves, mental health, diet, addiction, meeting the wrong people
5. The best way of overcoming problems and barriers to integration	direct migrants to "friendly places", places where people can learn English, free computer access, for example library, medical centres, walk in centres
6. Any other issues you would like to raise about the Gateway Project	-Training should be held in local & easily accessible venue, for example Navigator's centre, Friendship house. Training shouldn't be too long. -Advocate skills: basic counselling, listening, being non-judgmental, basic knowledge, legal matters - Health trainers communicate with migrant clients by using visual information, pictures - Knowledge needs: education system for children, local knowledge about immediate help, health issues, opening times of shops, street safety: where in Portsmouth not to go after darkness, police stations



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## Debrief

The debrief session is simply a meeting of those who conducted the interviews to draw inferences and conclusions, drawing conclusions from what we have heard. At this stage we can draw on our experience of the meetings to answer some basic questions raised by the interviews:

1. What are the main problems as seen by new immigrants, is improving contacts and referral and specifically the development of Community Advisors seen as likely to help?
2. Are eligible people likely to volunteer to become Community Advisors, if so how much time would they be prepared to give to this, what training and support would they require?
3. Do Community Organisation Leaders welcome this idea, how would they support it and how do they think it could work?
4. Do Service Leaders see advantages in the development of Community Advisors, how would they work with them and what benefits would this bring for their services?
5. What issues do other Home Office and Other Government representatives believe this project should address and how do they see Community Advisors contributing to this?
6. Do employers see advantages from the project, what impacts do they hope the project will achieve for them?
7. How can the concept and operation of the project be improved to meet the aims and objectives of all stakeholders?

## Report

As far as possible the report should reflect the words and language recorded from the interviews, focussing on key points made and reflecting their frequency and the emphasis and meaning attributed by the respondents. Clearly the writer will not be able to avoid some bias in selecting and interpreting remarks so it is important to check back with all interviewers to ensure that as far as possible the report reflects the impression gained from the interview. A convention for recording remarks is to use italics, with plain script used when the author infers points in order to clarify meaning. Such inference should be minimised as far as possible to let the respondent's views speak for themselves. While it would be desirable to record exactly the language used by respondents this will not always be practical in taking notes from meetings. Recording of conversations would perhaps be useful, however, if the disadvantage of this is that it creates an obstacle for the respondents, as in this case, it should be avoided.



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