

Executive summary

Knowledge Partnership consulted with 46 members of the African and Caribbean community living in Edinburgh and Lothian with the aim of identifying the community's needs in relation to economic, health and social matters. In addition, the consultation explored the community's vision for Africa Centre Scotland.

Key issues identified

Employment

- Access to employment that is commensurate with qualifications is a key issue affecting the communities we surveyed. In most cases, well qualified individuals were working in positions that did not relate directly to their field of academic study.
- Although 89% of our survey sample had qualifications at or above HNC level, only 57% were in employment at the time of interview, most often in lower skill jobs.
- 65% of our survey respondents agreed that they had experienced racial discrimination in Scotland when applying for a job.
- 72% of people agreed that work experience gained in Africa was not valued by Scottish employers, and that most employers wanted instead to see evidence of work experience gained in Scotland or the UK.
- 58% of survey respondents felt that for families or single parents, difficulties in accessing suitable child-care was a barrier to gaining employment.
- 79% of our survey had taken part in a job interview during the last 36 months. 69% of these individuals had not been offered the post they applied for, and within this group, 69% had not received feedback about their application or interview.
- 68% of people who were employed at the time of the survey agreed that they had experienced racial discrimination in the work-place.

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- An important barrier to career progression was the lack of information on jobs and careers with 76% of survey respondents agreeing that there was insufficient employment advice and information for African and Caribbean people.

Image, representation, and discrimination

- Most survey respondents felt that many African and Caribbean people suffered from a negative public perception. This was the result of stereotyping in the media, which often portrayed Africa as a continent of the “*downtrodden poor that cannot help itself or others*”.
- In our survey, 84% of people disagreed that the Scottish media portrayed African and Caribbean people in a positive way, while 63% agreed that unfair media portrayals of Africa and Caribbean people always went unchallenged.
- 75% of survey respondents agreed that African and Caribbean people lacked representation in local democracy. This situation and the lack of African-Caribbean held posts within decision making bodies means that any negative portrayals by the media can be difficult to overcome.
- Most survey respondents felt that there was a link between the media portrayal of African-Caribbean people and discrimination in Scotland. In public services, especially front line services, 92% of respondents agreed that service providers needed training to tackle discrimination. On balance, 67% of respondents agreed that there was institutional racism within Scotland.
- 76% of survey respondents agreed that barriers existed to African and Caribbean people integrating with the majority population in Scotland. The poor public image of Africa and discrimination towards African and Caribbean people were seen as important barriers to the achievement of integration.

Justice

- There is a tendency amongst African and Caribbean people to view the justice system in Scotland as biased against ethnic minorities. For example, 68% of respondents disagreed that the Police treat African and Caribbean people in an equal way to the majority population, while 82%

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disagreed that the African and Caribbean community has a good relationship with the Police.

Housing

- 78% of those consulted agreed that African and Caribbean people were at risk from racial harassment and racial incidents in Council housing areas. Also, 62% of respondents disagreed that there was good information available to African and Caribbean people on housing and housing related matters.
- For people whose status was "*without recourse to public funds*" there was no access to local authority housing. Housing issues that arose in relation to these types people were:
 - o The cost of private renting which is high compared to the salary that most African-Caribbean working people were able to command
 - o Racial discrimination in the private let agency market
 - o Long waiting lists for housing association properties.

State benefits and support networks

- 76% of survey respondents disagreed that African and Caribbean people living in Scotland had a good level of awareness of their rights to state benefits and entitlements.
- 60% of African-Caribbean women disagreed that there were many social networks or opportunities to socialize within the community; 71% of men disagreed that there were sufficient social networks for men.

Higher education and schooling

- All face-face survey respondents expressed satisfaction with their experience of higher education in Scotland.
- 89% of respondents said they agreed with the statement: "*Most school age children of African and Caribbean parents will have experienced racially motivated bullying at school*".

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- 70% of parents agreed that they were satisfied with the attainment levels of African and Caribbean pupils in Scottish schools. By contrast, 25% of non-parents were satisfied on this measure.
- 62% of parents disagreed that African-Caribbean children's level of attainment dropped off after moving from primary school to secondary school.

Healthcare

- On balance, only a small proportion of people experienced a major problem with healthcare services; most experienced a minor problem or no problem.
- However, there are some areas of difficulty that people identified in using healthcare services. These are mainly to do with the understanding of how services operate, for example:
 - o Knowledge of how to communicate with a GP and GP service
 - o Knowledge of the channels for accessing health services.
- When asked to comment on how access to health services could be improved for African and Caribbean people, 69% of respondents said there should be greater advocacy and support services to help people better express their views to healthcare professionals. 41% said having health information available in different formats would improve access, while 28% wanted more accessible interpreting services.
- 14% of respondents (3 men and 1 woman) said they had delayed or declined contact with health services in the past because of lack of confidence in the system and staff.
- 90% of our survey sample had attended hospital in the past three years, and 77% of these said that they had been very satisfied or fairly satisfied with the service received.
- None of the people we surveyed raised HIV-Aids as a problem that affected them personally. However, the subject of HIV-Aids was discussed independently by 2 respondents who highlighted concerns about the way that health services in Lothian had dealt with them, which was seen to be insensitive and discriminatory.

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Immigration

- Those African and Caribbean people that took part in the survey did not highlight immigration as a problem that they had personally faced. However, some of the community and project leaders we spoke to did refer to immigration as a challenging issue because it is a complex area, and if left unresolved, may lead to other problems such as stress and difficulties with health.
- Although small in number, the asylum community in Edinburgh and Lothian, in common with asylum seekers in other parts of Scotland, faces a number of challenges including stress disorders, identity issues, and language problems.
- The issues affecting people with refugee status are similar to those of people arriving in the UK for employment or study, for example, access to health services, access to employment and discrimination. Most of our survey sample did not mention asylum as an issue that affected them personally. However, it was noted by one of our interviewees that there was currently no specific support for African asylum seekers and refugees, and that this may have implications for the suitability of assistance that is provided to these groups.

The community's vision for Africa Centre Scotland

- The community has expressed a clear demand for Africa Centre Scotland to play a greater role than it does at present in addressing the needs of the African and Caribbean community. In this context, the vision and purpose of the Centre should be:
 - o Vision – inclusive of all African communities and all friends of Africa
 - o Purpose – representative and voice of the community; advice and information services; umbrella agency for African national communities.

A. Background and introduction

Africa Centre Scotland is a Scottish registered charity set up in 1998 (**1993**) to “promote the well being of all Africans and all people of African heritage regardless of ethnicity, currently residing in Scotland”. From its offices in Edinburgh, Africa Centre Scotland provides free advice, information, and drop-in facilities, **referrals** to all members of the African and Caribbean community. The advice and information offered by Africa Centre Scotland covers a number of areas including health, education, employment and the arts.

Africa Centre Scotland’s resources comprise an office space, plus volunteer staff. Partner organisations such as the Edinburgh and Lothian racial Equality Council work with Africa Centre Scotland to promote and run local events that are likely to be of interest to people of African and Caribbean descent. Funding for Africa Centre Scotland is provided through service level agreements struck with The City of Edinburgh Council, and from membership fees, charged to individuals, families, charities and statutory/commercial bodies.

In a voluntary sector funding environment which is tight, charities need to demonstrate that their activities are providing clear benefit for the communities they aim to serve. The Big Lottery fund “Investing in Ideas” provides a route for charities to demonstrate this benefit by providing monies for research that examines how far voluntary services are meeting communities’ needs, and what improvements or additional services are required to strengthen these communities.

At the end of June of 2007, Africa Centre Scotland will be applying to The Big Lottery for funding to support capacity building. In its application, Africa Centre is required to demonstrate how its proposals link to the needs of the local African and Caribbean community. As part of its application therefore, Africa Centre Scotland commissioned Knowledge Partnership to carry out a community consultation that explored the economic, health and other social needs of African and Caribbean people living in Edinburgh and Lothian.

Objectives

The primary aim of this project was for the consultant to design and deliver a consultation exercise with members of the African and Caribbean community residing in Edinburgh and Lothian. Underpinning this aim were a series of subsidiary objectives which are set out below:

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- Establish the views and ideas of people of African and Caribbean descent, living in Edinburgh and Lothian, with particular regard to health, employment, discrimination, justice, education and housing
- Identify the barriers to members of the African and Caribbean community accessing public services
- Assess the extent to which Africa Centre Scotland might assist the African and Caribbean community in addressing the issues raised through the consultation. This may take the form for example of seeking funding for permanent staff positions to take forward specific initiatives.

In May 2007, Knowledge Partnership was commissioned by Africa Centre Scotland to undertake an independent community based survey on behalf of the **Centreservice**. This report focuses on the findings of the community survey and the issues it raises for Africa Centre Scotland.

Research methods

Africa Centre Scotland supplied Knowledge Partnership with contact lists for community organisations, statutory bodies, and individuals who were to be invited to take part in the community consultation.

Knowledge Partnership contacted all organisations and individuals whose contact details were supplied by the Centre, using a combination of e-mail and telephone contact. As a result of these approaches, 7 community bodies agreed to take part in the community consultation by distributing copies of our questionnaire to African and Caribbean people on their contact databases. A total of 250 questionnaires were distributed through these bodies and via Africa Centre Scotland. Following this distribution, 29 completed questionnaires were returned, representing a response rate of 12%.

In addition to the questionnaire survey, Knowledge Partnership interviewed 15 individual members of the community on a face to face basis to explore their needs in relation to social and economic issues. A further 2 project managers were also interviewed in their capacity as community leaders. In total therefore, 46 individuals were consulted as part of the community consultation, using either postal questionnaires, or face-face interviewing methods.

Statistics

In this report, we quote statistics that derive from the postal survey questionnaire. In most cases, the statistics that are calculated are based on the exclusion of the “don’t know/no-opinion” responses. Specifically, where 20% or more of respondents answered “don’t know/no-opinion” to a question, their results have been excluded to make the calculation of the statistic more meaningful in relation to the item being discussed.

Structure of the report

The report is structured as follows:

- Section B briefly discusses the wider policy development issues affecting minority ethnic communities in Scotland.
- Section C explores the community needs and issues raised by the consultation.
- Section D presents the strategic and operational questions that arise for Africa Centre Scotland as a result of carrying out the community consultation.
- Section E sets out the conclusions and recommendations.

B. Policy development

Scottish Executive policy in relation to minority ethnic communities has been driven by developments in race and equalities legislation and by the focus on social justice, which has highlighted the social exclusion experienced by several parts of Scottish society, including the minority ethnic community.

Legislation

The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 provides a legal framework for mainstreaming of race equality, and for tackling institutional discrimination, exclusion, and restricted access to public services. The Act contains a number of provisions that affect the performance of public sector bodies in Scotland. The main provisions are:

- It is unlawful for a public authority to discriminate against a person on race grounds in carrying out any of its functions
- That public listed bodies must promote equality of opportunity and good relations between people of different racial groups
- For Scottish Ministers to place specific duties on public sector bodies through secondary legislation.

The Commission for Racial Equality published a statutory Code of Practice which came into effect in 2002, giving guidance to public bodies on both general and specific duties under the Act, for example the specific duty on educational establishments to have a race equality policy.

A review published in 2005 by the Scottish Executive found that progress in promoting racial equality and removing discrimination by public bodies was slow and exhibited wide variation between different agencies. A number of initiatives have been introduced to assist in improving this situation.

The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report (1999), which highlighted the matter of institutional racism in the UK, particularly within the justice system, was addressed by the Scottish Executive through The Deputy First Minister's Stephen Lawrence Steering Group. The remit of this group was to bring external scrutiny to the work of the Police and other parts of the justice system in Scotland. Working in parallel with the Steering Group was the Race Equality Advisory Forum, also set up in 1999. The remit of the Race Equality Advisory Forum was wider than that of the Steering group, and comprised:

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- Advising the Executive on a strategy to address race equality issues
- Promoting race equality and developing plans to tackle institutional racism
- Advising the Scottish Executive on methods for consulting with minority ethnic communities.

The Race Equality Advisory Forum (REAF) reported in 2001 presenting around 400 recommendations that included mainstreaming race equality into policy, improving the research and information base on minority ethnic communities, and making better provision for translating and interpreting services. REAF also drew up action plans in eight areas of public policy for example health, education and local government, and called on public bodies to design and operate their services in a way that increased the possibility of access by minority ethnic people.

The Executive responded to the REAF report by commissioning improvement and development programmes around access, training and education, recruitment, reporting and monitoring. In November 2005, the Executive commissioned a review of its race equality work to date, concluding that while the foundations had been laid to tackle disadvantage and discrimination in Scotland, a number of areas were in need of development. This included an acknowledgement that the pace of change in public bodies in tackling race inequality and disadvantage had been slow, and that “good race equality performance often seems to be agency discretion, rather than a public service guarantee”¹.

Social justice

The Scottish Executive’s Social Justice Strategy seeks to ensure that everyone in Scotland has the opportunity to participate to the maximum of his or her potential. This strategy adopts a life-cycle approach and sets a framework for promoting equality and social justice based on the 5 key principles of integration, prevention, understanding, inclusiveness and empowerment. These principles are reflected in the Executive’s Equality Strategy (Towards and Equality Strategy), which seeks to deliver better services by tackling discrimination and promoting equal opportunities.

¹ Scottish Executive Review of Race Equality Work in Scotland, 2005

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Taken together, social justice strategy and legislation to tackle discrimination have underpinned much of the basis of the Scottish Executive's current work in support of the minority ethnic community in Scotland.

Evidence on Scotland's minority ethnic communities

One of the findings of the REAF report was that there was little reliable evidence describing the characteristics of the minority ethnic community in Scotland; neither was there information to adequately describe the challenges facing this community.

In light of these criticisms, during the 2001 Census, additional data on the minority ethnic community in Scotland was collected. We have used this information here to provide a population estimate of the African and Caribbean communities living in Edinburgh and Lothian.

In addition to its work in producing the 2001 Census data, the Executive also commissioned several scoping surveys to examine competing methods for conducting research with Scotland's minority ethnic communities. Here we have used these various studies as a basis for presenting broad based evidence on the challenges facing the minority ethnic community across Scotland.

Population

According to the 2001 Census, there are 6,900 African and Caribbean people living in Scotland, with 75% of these being of African ethnicity. Compared to the total minority ethnic population, African and Caribbean people account for approximately 7%.

We can very roughly estimate the total numbers of all African and Caribbean people living in Scotland and residing in Edinburgh and Lothian, using figures derived from the 2001 Census. Using this data, we can estimate that the population figures by sub-region are:

- City of Edinburgh	1,200
- West Lothian	145
- Midlothian	50
- East Lothian	40
Sub total for region	<u>1,435</u>

Challenges facing the minority ethnic community

The following are some of the main areas of concern raised by a recent piece of Scottish Executive research² into the attitudes and opinions of minority ethnic communities living in Scotland. As we shall see in the next section of this report, some of these broader concerns are shared by African and Caribbean communities.

Health

According to the research, access to health services is the top priority issue for minority ethnic communities in Scotland. Key issues in this area of public service are communication difficulties, including language barriers, knowledge and use of interpreter services, and the cultural dimension of health service provision. These types of issue are considered as barriers to minority ethnic communities making full use of Scotland's health services, leading to a poor experience of health care.

Employment

There was experience of racial discrimination in employment (in recruitment practices and in the work place). This prevented fair and equal access to employment opportunities. There were also criticisms that Scottish employers did not value overseas qualifications, leading to a requirement for people to re-train in Scotland.

Education

There was a lack of awareness in the Scottish education system of minority ethnic cultural traditions and their relevance to teaching, for example in the teaching of religion.

Justice

A view was put forward that the justice system treated minority ethnic communities differently from the white majority population. For example, racist incidents were not always dealt with effectively by the Police.

² Scottish Executive, Focus Groups with Minority Ethnic Communities, 2003

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Housing

Council house allocations to members of the minority ethnic community tended to be in the worst areas with the poorest housing. There was also a lack of information about housing and housing related issues.

Discrimination in public services

Discrimination pervaded many aspects of Scottish society, including its institutions. There was a feeling expressed that mainstream public services should be changed (**redesigned**) so that they provided a more appropriate and more responsive service to minority ethnic people.

C. Key issues

In this section, we set out the key issues facing the African and Caribbean communities living in Edinburgh and Lothian, starting with employment.

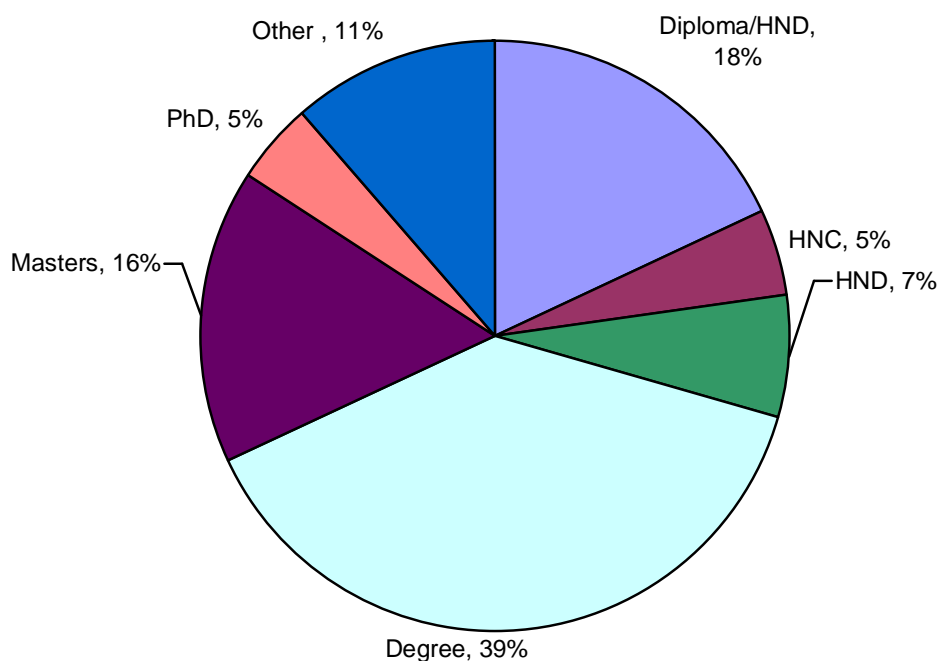
Employment

Access to employment that is commensurate with qualifications is a key issue affecting the communities we surveyed. In most cases, well qualified individuals with Post Graduate Masters and 1st degrees were working (sometimes for several years), in posts that did not relate directly to their field of academic study. In addition, many of the posts being filled by these individuals were of a low skill level.

Amongst the 44 people that took part in our consultation, 4 had chosen to become self-employed, in part because the available employment opportunities were seen to be career limiting. A fifth highly qualified interviewee was considering becoming self-employed because of the problems experienced in accessing suitable job opportunities.

Figure 1 illustrates the highest qualification held by the people we surveyed. This shows for example, that 39% held degrees, and 16% held a Masters.

Figure 1 - Highest qualifications of survey sample



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Although 89% of our sample had qualifications at or above HNC level, Table 1 illustrates that only 57% were in employment at the time of interview. Of those in employment, most were in NHS or voluntary sector care posts; in several cases these employees were qualified to MSc level in non-care related subjects. 25% of the sample in Table 1 was unemployed. However, 9 (82%) of these 11 people had HNC qualifications or higher.

Table 1 – analysis of positions held by sampled group (44 people)		
Posts held	Number of people	% of total
<u>Administrative posts</u> - administrator, sales assistant, cashier, travel guide	6	14%
<u>Care posts</u> – care assistant, nursing assistant, nurse, support worker	10	23%
<u>Project leader posts</u>	2	5%
<u>Ancillary posts</u> – cleaner and janitor	1	2%
<u>Self employed</u>	4	9%
<u>Other posts</u> - scientific analyst and cook	2	5%
Total employed or self-employed	25	57%
<u>Unemployed</u>	11	25%
<u>In further education</u> (includes 2 students also working in PT care posts)	8	18%

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Barriers to gaining employment

The survey identified a number of barriers to African and Caribbean people gaining employment in Scotland including racial discrimination, lack of local work experience, limited child care options, and increased competition from EU labour.

65% of our survey respondents agreed that they had experienced racial discrimination in Scotland when applying for a job. During the face-face surveys, most of our respondents said that after completing their studies in Scotland, they had made several unsuccessful applications for employment. Many had their job applications rejected before getting to the interview stage. Most respondents felt that this was clear evidence of occupational discrimination against a person's ethnic background.

"I found it quite difficult as a post-graduate in Edinburgh. I have applied for many jobs, but if you have a 'weird' name, it's difficult to get an interview"

"I applied for a secretarial post through an agency and though many posts were advertised, I was never invited for interview – I think that's down to discrimination"

"It's not very easy to get a job here; I think when people see on the application form that you are African, there is discrimination".

In addition to discrimination on grounds of ethnicity, most respondents agreed that there was discrimination against African and Caribbean people because of their lack of UK work experience. In our survey, 72% of people agreed that work experience gained in Africa was not valued by Scottish employers, and that most employers wanted instead to see evidence of work experience gained in Scotland or the UK.

"I have the feeling that the Scottish society feels you have not done enough; they feel that the experience you bring here is not to standard. Not having UK experience or education seems to be a big issue, even though you may have come to the UK from a country that has same laws".

"There is a tendency by the employer to disregard your experience before coming to the UK. They will ask "what have you done since coming to the UK?"

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“My experience is that the qualifications and experience that job applicants have from back home is not recognised here”.

58% of survey respondents felt that for families or single parents, difficulties in accessing suitable child-care was a barrier to gaining employment.

“Lack of appropriate childcare provision can be an issue for many in our community especially in relation to getting part-time work”

“Childcare is quite expensive and I didn’t like the food they were giving him. It would be nice if there was some place run by Africans that could at least give him African food”.

Several survey respondents also noted that since the expansion of the EU, there is now more competition for local jobs. Faced with an increased labour supply, employers are tending to apply a UK or European experience test to their application assessment, a development that will serve to increase the pressure on African and Caribbean people seeking work.

“Because of new migrants coming here, more and more jobs are now more competitive and this means that employers are looking for more experience. This will put us at a disadvantage when applying for work”

“Some potential employers have told me that the job was meant for a UK or EU citizen even though it doesn’t say so in the advert”

“At one interview I attended I was told that my lack of UK or EU experience was a barrier”.

Feedback on job interviews

79% of our sample survey had taken part in a job interview during the last 36 months. 69% of these individuals had not been offered the post they applied for, and within this group, 69% had not received feedback about their application or interview.

According to one applicant:

“I have applied for a number of jobs and in most cases was not offered the job and no reasonable explanation was given”.

One survey respondent wished that she had pressed potential employers to tell her why she had not been offered the posts she applied for;

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"I wish I had, but I didn't ask why I didn't get the jobs I applied for. It's too late now; I am just going to stick with the job I've got for now".

Barriers to career progression

Once our survey sample had secured employment, there were further challenges to career progression in the form of work-place discrimination, lack of careers information, and problems over child-care.

68% of people who were employed at the time of the survey agreed that they had experienced racial discrimination in the work-place. According to one student we interviewed who was working part-time:

"I've certainly felt discrimination at the work-place; any small problem I had was made into something big; I worked over-time and they just cancelled the hours on my time-sheet; and there's other things they've done that make me feel discriminated against"

As highlighted in Figure 1 and Table 1, our survey sample was highly qualified but usually employed in lower skill jobs that in most cases did not reflect their training and qualifications. One respondent said that only after he had worked in a series of low grade jobs for several years had he gained sufficient work experience to become accepted by the majority community.

"Since 2002 I have done many things. After training and education, myself and most of my friends have had to do jobs that are not equivalent to their academic studies. As a student, I have moved from cleaning jobs, care, to support and then after a long time, knocking on several doors, they will say right, you've come of age, we understand your accent, so we can now bring you in"

Another respondent highlighted the discrimination that occurred between her post qualification work experience and that of her fellow students who were native Scots:

"I went to business school here, but even then, for me to get the job I wanted to get, I had to start from the simple administration work and build my way up, whereas the same people I was with at university, started work in managerial positions-I had to start as an administrator".

In addition to discrimination within the job market, a lack of affordable child-care was seen to be preventing career commitment and progression. For example, one mother we spoke to felt that she would not be able to pursue a

career because child-care was so expensive. Instead, she would work only at weekends so that she could look after her children during the week. Another respondent, a single father confirmed the problem of combining child-care with a career:

“Childcare is very expensive- I have to find friends to look after my daughter when I go to work. This means that some people will only take the job that allows them to work to accommodate children”.

A further barrier to career progression was the lack of information on jobs and careers with 76% of the survey sample agreeing that there was insufficient employment advice and information for African and Caribbean people.

Image, representation, and discrimination

“Public image is one of the biggest issues that Africans face- the media is the big problem. The media is only focusing on the problems Africa experiences, and this does not help people here or Africans there. At the end of the day, it is the Scottish society that will suffer, because African talent will leave the country. The media needs to give a balanced picture. No media channel has taken the challenge to explain the very strong tie that exists between Africa and the UK”

“When someone sees me they just see me as an immigrant, here to take someone’s job. There is no-one to represent us to tell these people the truth; we are not all asylum seekers, or illegal immigrants. I’m not a refugee; I don’t get anything”.

Most survey respondents felt that much of the negative public perception of African and Caribbean people was the result of stereotyping in the media, which often portrayed Africa as a continent of the “*downtrodden poor that cannot help itself or others*”. In our survey, 84% of people disagreed that the Scottish media portrayed African and Caribbean people in a positive way, while 63% agreed that unfair media portrayals of Africa and African-Caribbean people always go unchallenged.

75% of survey respondents agreed that African and Caribbean people lacked representation in local democracy. This situation and the lack of African-Caribbean held posts within decision making bodies means that any negative portrayals by the media can be difficult to overcome.

In many cases, the negative media image can permeate into the African and Caribbean community leading, in some individuals, to feelings of isolation and alienation.

“Because of this image, you can feel social insecurity-you feel as if all the eyes are on you. People feel that Scottish society looks at African people as semi-people. They don’t tend to look at them as normal people; they look at like you as if you are bad news. The face of the African is that of problem, beggar, aids, disease, illegal immigrant – that is the picture painted by the average Scottish person. This creates prejudice, for example at work. Even the lowest level Scottish person, who may not have gone to school, still thinks he knows better than you. You feel that your ideas don’t count at work”.

All survey respondents agreed that something had to be done to challenge the negative media portrayal of African and Caribbean people, and to assist individual members of the community to overcome feelings of social isolation and gain representation.

Discrimination

Most survey respondents felt that there was a link between the media portrayal of African-Caribbean people and discrimination in Scotland. In public services, especially front line services, 92% of respondents agreed that service providers needed training to tackle discrimination (Figure 2).

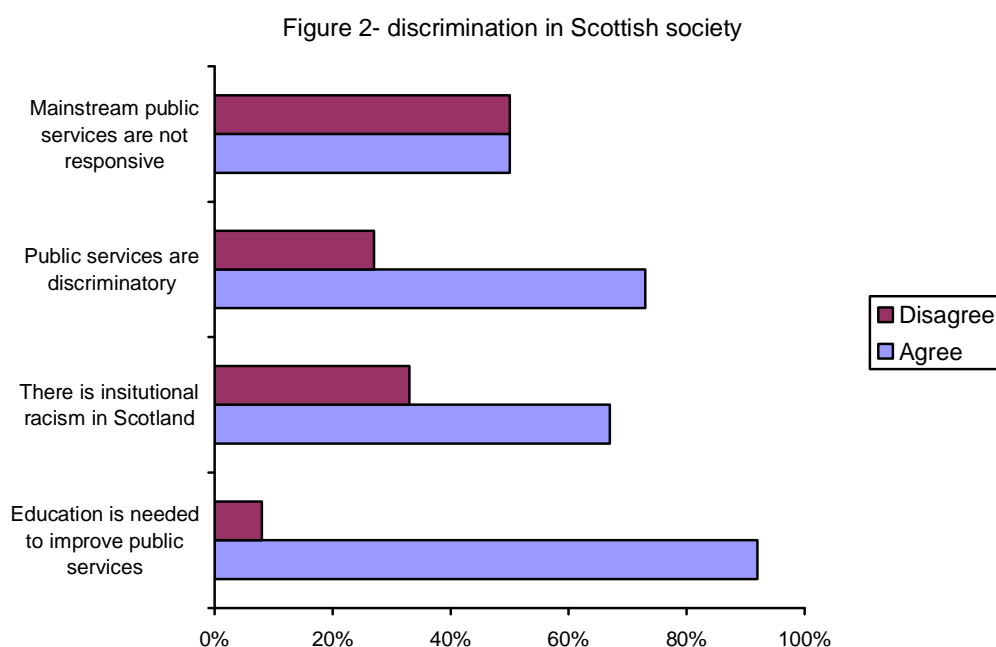
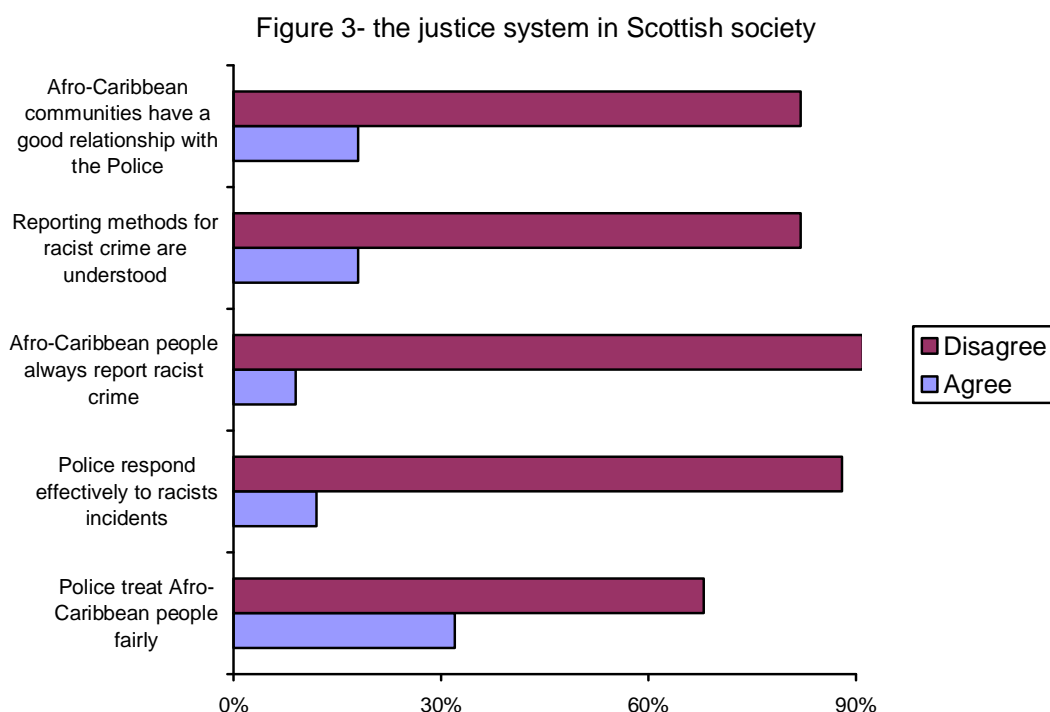


Figure 2 also shows that 50% of survey respondents disagreed that mainstream public services were responsive to the needs of African and Caribbean people (50% agreed services were responsive); 73% agreed that services were discriminatory and 67% agreed that there was institutional racism within Scotland. Discrimination was felt to exist in a number of areas of public (and private) life including employment, health, transport, policing and the courts.

76% of survey respondents agreed that barriers existed to African and Caribbean people integrating with the majority population in Scotland. The poor public image of Africa and discrimination towards African and Caribbean people were seen as important barriers to the achievement of integration.

The justice system

Figure 3 illustrates people's level of agreement with a series of statements about the justice system. This Figure shows for example, that in relation to policing, 32% of respondents agreed that the Police treat African and Caribbean people in an equal way to the majority population, while 18% agreed that the African and Caribbean community has a good relationship with the Police.



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On balance, Figure 3 points to higher levels of disagreement than agreement with the statements shown highlighting for example a tendency for African and Caribbean people not to report incidents of racial crime (91% disagree that members of the community always report such incidents – one interviewee told us during the face-face interviews that she had not gone to court over a crime because of fear of reprisals against her family).

A small number of people interviewed during the face-face survey had first hand experience of the Police and courts, and their views were somewhat mixed.

INTERVIEWER: What has been your experience of the justice system in Scotland?

“The justice system is wrong. Every time you go to court you have no chance. It’s my experience that the justice system is biased against ethnic minorities. You have a 1% chance of winning the case – I’ve seen this first hand, and it’s biased all the way through. It’s going to get worse with stop and search.”

“The Police are discriminatory - they took a long time to follow up my case, and in the end I did not get justice”

“The Police tend to stop black people in their cars-they say they are looking for stolen cars. I think most of the people I know have been stopped by the Police”

“We are always being stopped by the Police-you tend just to accept it now”

“In terms of the Police, [a member of the family was attacked] and they have been doing a good job in trying to follow up, and make sure [they] were OK, being linked to victim support etc

“I reported a racist incident to the Police and they put me through victim support who were very helpful”.

Housing

96% of survey respondents disagreed with the statement:

“Council housing allocated to African and Caribbean people living in Scotland tends to be in the best areas and in the good housing”.

In addition, 78% agreed that African and Caribbean people were at risk from racial harassment and racial incidents in Council housing areas. Also, 62% of respondents disagreed that there was good information available to African and Caribbean people on housing and housing related matters. This last point was confirmed in discussion with a community representative who said on housing:

“There is generally a lack of advice on housing needs and issues. People don’t always know where to go for advice. They may also feel uncomfortable using statutory housing bodies for advice of this kind”.

Most of the people we interviewed on a face-face basis were living in Scotland “without recourse to public funds” meaning that their status also precluded them from accessing local authority housing. The type of housing accessed by the survey group therefore comprised private renting, housing association, or owner occupied. Some issues that arose in relation to these types of tenure were:

- The cost of private renting which is high compared to the salary that working people were able to command
- Racial discrimination in the private let agency market. *“In a few cases I have made enquires about a private rented flat to be told that the landlord would prefer to have a local person”*
- Long waiting lists for housing association properties. This can mean that people such as students must access a private let as they will have insufficient time to wait for a housing association allocation.

Some respondents noted that apart from finding accommodation, there could be challenges in adjusting to life in Scottish style accommodation such as multi-storey flats, which is a form of building not well known in Africa or the Caribbean. One respondent also suggested that because of the shortage of affordable housing in Edinburgh some exceptional provision should be made

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for specific groups of immigrants, for example, workers on the Fresh Talent Initiative.

State benefits and support networks

76% of survey respondents disagreed that African and Caribbean people living in Scotland had a good level of awareness of their rights to state benefits and entitlements. As noted previously, those people we interviewed on a face-face basis did not have access to state benefits due to immigration rules.

We identified during our interviews the existence of a number of country groups that offered support networks to African and Caribbean people; these included groups such as the Scotland-Zambia Association and the Tanzanian Edinburgh Community Association. Such groups were well established partly because of the large and long settled populations of Zambians and Tanzanians living in Scotland. For other smaller country groups such as the Ethiopian community, formal, established networks do not exist (although support may still take place on an informal basis).

Table 2 shows the response of survey respondents to two questions relating to social networks for African and Caribbean men and women. On balance, most women and men agree that there is a lack of social networks for the African and Caribbean population.

Table 2 – social networks for women and men (base 29)		
Posts held	There are <u>many</u> social networks and opportunities to socialise for African and Caribbean women (women's responses only)	There is a <u>lack</u> of social networks and opportunities to socialise for African and Caribbean men (men's responses only)
Strongly agree	7%	21%
Agree	20%	50%
Disagree	27%	7%
Strongly disagree	33%	7%

Higher education and schooling

Higher education

All face-face survey respondents expressed satisfaction with their experience of higher education in Scotland.

“Higher education, I cannot fault it. I think for me it’s been the best. I think the Scottish higher education system for me is one of the best in the world”

“The college is a very good place; the lecturers are very good and they try to make the lessons as practical as possible”

“The university I went to was one of the best”

“I found Napier a very positive experience”

“I had to drop out from University because of my health but now that I’m returning after about 3 years, I would say they have done as much as they could to accommodate me, they’ve been really helpful”.

Some ex-students did indicate there were challenges at the start of their course because of the different approach of Scottish academic institutions to aspects of report writing, and critical analysis. One respondent for example felt that more support at the beginning of the course for overseas students could have made his experience better:

“I did not feel that enough care was taken to prepare us for our studies. We just had general preparation with students from UK and Europe, but with our background, we felt disadvantaged. I think they were supposed to teach us how a typical UK lecturer would understand certain issues – interpretation of questions, joining up of projects, these areas were not looked at the same as back home. As a result I did not achieve to the level I would have if I had received some really personal assistance.”

One other ex-student indicated that initially she had problems with understanding the English language as spoken by Scottish lecturers. Support for spoken and written English was available at the college, although this person supplemented her formal lessons with a part-time job, which allowed her to understand local dialect.

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A further important point was raised about funding of overseas students in higher education by one former student of Edinburgh University. This person suggested that initiatives such as Fresh Talent were not working because former students were using the opportunity of work simply to pay off debts:

"In most cases foreign students pay 3 times the local students. But increasingly, African students may not have a scholarship. This means they have to use their spare time to work to pay their fees. Therefore, you do not have a life outside work and studies. People are using Fresh Talent as a way of paying off debts; rather than an opportunity. All of this limits the chances of students to experience Scotland. Foreign students find it difficult to get loans, so the question of fees needs to be looked at".

Schooling

Parents and non-parents were asked to say if they agreed or disagreed with the following statement about schools; 89% said they agreed with the statement:

"Most school age children of African and Caribbean parents will have experienced racially motivated bullying at school"

However, most parents we talked to during the face-face interview programme felt that children could cope well with this issue, and that racial discrimination did not inhibit their progress through school:

"I don't think there are specific challenges to African children moving through the school system-the kids have their own way of coping with racism at school".

"My son has plenty of friends at school, so I don't think he has any problems at school"

"We have a good school here; I have no problem with the system of education here. My son is benefiting from good level of interaction with the teacher; he improved his English within just 2 or 3 weeks; I cannot speak as good English as he can now. He has good friends at school and he is getting a lot of cross cultural interaction".

On balance, 70% of parents agreed that they were satisfied with the attainment levels of African and Caribbean pupils in Scottish schools. By contrast, 25% of non-parents were satisfied on this measure.

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62% of parents disagreed that African-Caribbean children's level of attainment dropped off after moving from primary school to secondary school. Discussions with parents during the face-face interviews supported this view:

"I really don't agree that performance drops off when African children move to secondary school –that's not true." There are a number of good secondary schools that allow minority ethnic people to assimilate into the classroom like Drummond High School, and Gillespies. They are very good schools and they provide ample chances"

"My children came straight into secondary school from home, but I wouldn't say their performance was now worse. The problem they were having was that what they were learning here, they had already done in Africa. So, they were bored, and had no motivation to go to school, because they knew the things already".

One parent did point to the complexity of the Scottish secondary education system and felt that because of her lack of understanding, her son may have made a poor subject choice:

"At secondary, it can be difficult for parents to understand the level of education (year 2, level 3 etc). Because I didn't know about these levels I allowed him to drop a subject that he may now need for his future studies".

However, in other respects, this mother felt that her 3 children (1 at primary and 2 at secondary school) were doing well.

Interestingly, on the issue of changing attainment levels, the views of non-parents tended to be more negative than that of parents. In this case, 33% of non-parents disagreed that African-Caribbean children's level of attainment dropped off after moving from primary school to secondary school (compared with 62% of parents).

Three parents suggested that their children's schools should be giving more home-work so that children continued to take school seriously:

"I think that children are not given enough homework to keep them busy at home"

"We need our children to have more home-work"

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“There could be issues of peer pressure in transition from primary to secondary; racism/bullying may affect performance; but children are never forced to take school seriously”.

Healthcare

Survey respondents were invited to comment on a series of statements concerning communication within healthcare provision, in Scotland. The results of this enquiry are presented at Table 3. On balance, Table 3 illustrates that a small proportion of people experience a major problem with healthcare communications; most experience no problem.

Table 3 – healthcare communication issues facing the African and Caribbean community (base 29)			
Communication issue	A major problem	A minor problem	Not a problem
Explaining your health problem to a doctor or other health professional	3%	24%	72%
Arranging an appointment to see a doctor or health professional	10%	17%	72%
Accessing out of hours health services such as GP services or accident and emergency	7%	10%	45% (38%, no opinion)
Receiving an adequate explanation of a diagnosis from a health professional	10%	10%	72%
Receiving sufficient information about your treatment	10%	17%	72%
Knowing how to arrange for an interpreter	10%	3%	41% (45%, no opinion)
Using interpreter services	4%	4%	41% (55%, no opinion)

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Our discussions with African and Caribbean people broadly supports the view presented in Table 3 that most people do not have a major difficulty in accessing healthcare in Scotland.

"To be honest, I don't have any problems- appointments are easy it's all no problem"

"The only time I got sick was last year and I didn't have any problems-except, it takes time to get an appointment, but this is the same for everyone"

"I've been to hospital a couple of times, and I got fairly speedy service, so overall it's not too bad"

"I have never had any problems with health services; I have been able to reach a GP and I have the confidence that when something goes wrong, I have somebody to go to. My wife recently had a health problem and she was able to get access to the GP and get the prescription and get the treatment. There are maybe issues of booking where you might be told to come next week, when you need someone today"

"I am aware that the facilities here are better than they are in Uganda; you can access them more quickly in Uganda because there is no waiting lists, but we have not had any problems here with medical assistance; we cannot complain about the standards or our experience".

However, there are some areas of difficulty that people identified in using healthcare services. These are mainly to do with the understanding of how services operate, for example:

Knowledge of how to communicate with a GP and GP service

"Sometimes, there can be a problem for people to express themselves to the doctors so that they can diagnose what the problem is; we don't know how much we should say to the doctor about what we feel is wrong with us. In terms of treatment, some people won't ask their GP about why certain tablets have been prescribed"

"Most of us do speak and understand English, but there can still be problems over language. Speaking good English is not the same as understanding what certain words mean. For example, being told by a doctor to take certain tablets with food; what is food? What is food here is not the same as African point of view. It is the interpretation of certain words that can be a problem, so

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that they make sense. Also, some people do not understand how the receptionist system works, and think that if they tell the receptionist information about their illness, maybe they will be seen, and they end up disclosing information. It's just the understanding of the way the health service works here, which is quite different".

Knowledge of how health services operate

"I don't think health services are an issue for our community; but maybe our understanding of how the health service operates might be an issue. For example, we had a person whose child was unwell; the health service put the responsibility back on the parents to look after the child – people seemed not to know their rights in relation to health services"

"There's been a slight problem on dental care because we did not know we had to keep in touch every 6 months. When I went back, because I needed a dentist, I was no longer registered"

"Especially for newcomers their lack of knowledge of the system is the problem faced in accessing health services"

"If you go through the right channels there is no problem; but it would be good if we had a clearer idea of the channels to be used when accessing health services".

The medical professions lack of awareness of specific conditions/diseases

"I don't think there is a barrier in health services. The only thing that might happen is the understanding of ailments, for example, not all doctors have got knowledge of tropical diseases. When there is inadequacy in the provision, it's not because the provision isn't there, it's because of a lack of knowledge"

I have heard some people say there can be wrong diagnosis of skin problems because of our colour".

Interpreter services

In the survey, 10% of African-Caribbean people said that they had a major problem knowing how to arrange for interpreter services. This represents a further dimension to knowing how healthcare services operate. When asked who should be responsible for arranging interpreter services, 79% of respondents said the hospital or GP.

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When asked to comment on how access to health services could be improved for African and Caribbean people, 69% of respondents said there should be greater advocacy and support services to help people better express their views to healthcare professionals. 41% said having health information available in different formats would improve access, while 28% wanted more accessible interpreting services.

Areas for improvement in healthcare

17 out of 29 survey respondents (59%) made suggestions for improvements to the accessibility and quality of healthcare services. These are listed at Table 4; some of these suggestions overlap with the comments made by interviewees during the face to face survey, for example, around improving a patient's understanding of a doctor's diagnosis.

Table 4 – suggested areas for improvement in healthcare services
Tackle racism amongst health service staff, particularly front-line staff
Educate existing staff to be more culturally aware of African and Caribbean health issues and accessibility considerations
Satisfy people's wish to see a doctor of their choice for example, on religious grounds
Recruit more minority ethnic staff in positions of diagnosis or healthcare support
Give doctors more time for consultations so that diagnoses are correct
Increase the representation of African and Caribbean people in health services and have better liaison between health services managers and African and Caribbean community leaders

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Use of healthcare services

79% of survey respondents said that they have never declined to make use of, or delayed contacting, health services when they or a member of their family has required medical assistance. 14% of respondents (3 men and 1 woman) said they had delayed or declined contact with health services in the past; reasons not to contact the service comprise:

- 1) "I don't think I will get the attention and treatment needed"
- 2) "I thought my health was alright"
- 3) "Not sure if there would be a favourable response"
- 4) "Not confident in their response or treatment towards me or what assistance I will be given (felt misunderstood and ignored)".

Without further investigation of these cases, it is difficult to explain what might be behind the four comments made. However, there is some evidence from the face-face interviews that African men may be unwilling to approach health services after hearing about, or experiencing directly, negative health service approaches around HIV-Aids, which it is claimed can be discriminatory (see section on HIV-Aids)

Another face-face respondent pointed to the different meaning of confidentiality between African and UK culture as a possible barrier to using services:

"There is the issue of not understanding confidentiality. Africans, when you say confidential, it's like secret, you don't have to breathe a word to anybody. So service providers like GPs need to explain things to say it's not a secret, but it is confidential meaning that it won't go outside the office. Once trust is broken in this way, it will take a long time to build it back again with Africans"

90% of our survey sample had attended hospital in the past three years, and 77% of these said that they had been very satisfied or fairly satisfied with the service received. 23% of people said they were dissatisfied for the following reasons:

Reasons to be dissatisfied with hospital services

Quality of service or treatment

"I was seriously ill but the hospital took 6 hours to arrange treatment for me"

"Risk of outbreak of MRSA; outdated technology; poor food"

"I waited a long time to see a doctor-wasn't given full information about process (appointment issues)".

Racial discrimination

"I had a feeling that they had a pre-conceived idea or prejudice against me as an African, and my friend was told outright, without medical tests that he had Aids".

HIV Aids

None of the people we surveyed discussed HIV-Aids as a problem that affected them personally. This is unsurprising given that our survey was not designed or administered in a way that would allow people to raise such a sensitive issue.

However, the subject of HIV-Aids was raised independently by 2 respondents who highlighted concerns about the way that health services in Lothian had dealt with them, which was seen to be insensitive and discriminatory:

"When I went to the GP with a health problem, the GP asked me where I was from, and when I told him, he said I would need to take an HIV test ; it took a long time for the test results to come, and they wanted to send me for other tests. I felt like I was being knocked about from one place to the next because they believed I was HIV"

"I went to see a GP at the university health service. The first thing he asked me was, before you came (to Scotland), did you take an aids test? Is there any issue of HIV aids in your family; what about TB. I wanted to know why he was asking this; I found out that he was only asking this sort of question about African people. That sort of experience makes you feel a bit worried about going to the doctors again".

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Research by Waverley Care³ amongst 25 HIV positive Africans living in Scotland has revealed a number of specific challenges to the treatment of HIV within the African community living in Scotland, including:

- People's unwillingness to take an HIV test because of stigma, or their denial of any illness
- Fear of the results of a HIV test, given people's perception from home that HIV is an illness that cannot be treated successfully
- Problems over understanding how health services work in the Scotland, and the attitude of some health service staff towards people being assessed with HIV (these issues of understanding and access also apply in other areas of treatment).

Immigration

Those African and Caribbean people that took part in the survey did not highlight immigration as a problem that they had personally faced.

"Even before I settled here, when I was a student, there was never any problem with my visa. As long as you follow everything, there is not any problem with immigration"

"Personally I have not had any problems on this".

However, some of the community and project leaders we spoke to did refer to immigration as a challenging issue because it is a complex area, and if left unresolved, can lead to other problems such as stress and difficulties with health.

"A lot of people resent the government policy on immigration. You send your passport to the home office and you don't know when you are going to hear from them; you can't plan your life; you can't travel; you can't work; you are not allowed to claim any benefits. People become stressed; there are financial issues; there are issues to do with housing, because you are not supposed to be housed by public agencies. All of these pressures can be really distressing for most people anyway."

³ HIV becomes your name, Waverley Care, June 2005 (Eunice Sinyemu and Martha Baillie)

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Asylum seekers and refugees

As of August 2006, there were just over 5,000 asylum seekers in Scotland, and 98% of these were residing in Glasgow. 28% of asylum seekers in Glasgow were from African nations, principally Somalia and the Democratic Republic of Congo. According to the Edinburgh Refugee Council, there were 65 asylum seekers living outside Glasgow, mainly in Edinburgh and Lothian during 2007. Assuming that 28% of these asylum seekers were also from African nations, then the number of African people seeking asylum in Edinburgh and Lothian during 2007 was approximately 18.

Although small in number, the asylum community in Edinburgh and Lothian, in common with asylum seekers in other parts of Scotland, faces a number of challenges⁴:

- Issues around health including mental health, with instances of post-traumatic stress disorders following poor treatment in the home country
- Issues of identity associated with displacement from a home country
- Disconnection from family
- Discrimination and harassment based on cultural differences
- Language issues, for example within the Sudanese community.

Information on refugee numbers in Edinburgh and Lothian have proved difficult to substantiate. Estimates suggest that between 3,000-4,000 refugees were living in Glasgow during 2005. The Edinburgh Refugee Council estimates that there were 370 people with refugee status living in Edinburgh and Lothian during 2007, of which we might estimate that one in four were from African nations, giving a total African refugee figure of 92 people.

The issues affecting people with refugee status are similar to those for people arriving in the UK for employment or study, for example, access to health services, access to employment and discrimination. Although most of our survey sample did not mention asylum as an issue that affected them personally, it was noted by one of our interviewees that there was currently no specific support for African asylum seekers and refugees, and that this may have implications for the suitability of assistance that is provided to these groups.

⁴ Source: interview with the Edinburgh Refugee Centre

D. Issues for Africa Centre Scotland

In this section, we set out possible issues for the vision, purpose, and resources of Africa Centre based on the feedback given by the community.

Vision

Many respondents asked for a vision for Africa Centre Scotland that was inclusive of all people with an interest in the continent of Africa:

“They should be a unifying point for everybody, and if they are, all the grievances that people want to discuss can be aired through the Centre. They should not discriminate between non-black Africans and black Africans. In the south are the white Africans, and in the north are the Arabs – the Africa Centre should be not just be a black African centre”

“In the past, they took personally any criticisms of the African Centre. To turn it around, they have to embrace everybody”

“Africa Centre should be a melting pot for all of those with an interest in Africa; there are many organisations working for Africa that are based here in Scotland. A Centre for Africans and friends of Africa, it should help these organisations with contacts and projects”

“The Centre needs to ensure that it represents all Africans. It should be a voice to challenge polarisation within the African community, for example, not the Zimbabwean community or Ugandan community, it’s the Southern Africa community. There also need to be local British people involved as well as Africans who are not only from sub-Saharan Africa”

“We shouldn’t just limit ourselves to the African nations – we should integrate and try get Scottish and Irish friends to the Centre to educate them on what Africa’s all about-we should have talks about different countries and promote Africa and not stick in a little Africa house”

Purpose

Members of the community consider that Africa Centre Scotland should serve a number of purposes, including functioning as an umbrella body, providing advice, information and services, and being a voice for the African and Caribbean communities living in Scotland.

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Umbrella body for African nation organisations

"It should act as a more effective umbrella organisation for the various African nation organisations, such as the Sudanese, Nigerian, Zimbabwean. Although it provides things like meeting support, it could be doing more for these groups"

"I think Africa centre should support national groups like ours – we aren't registered so maybe they could help us with that?"

"It should be an umbrella organisation where various ethnic or country groupings can bring their issues"

Advice, information and outreach

"The one thing I would say is that the Centre could function as an Access Point; the first port of call when you arrive as a student or new entrant. They would tell you about local facilities and accommodation, all based on peoples' experience. They could have a website that would contain this type of information as well as who's who, places of worship – all of this information could be accessed before people visit Scotland."

Although there is the Refugee centre in Shandwick Place there is no organisation working specifically for Africans seeking asylum or living as refugees in Edinburgh. This might be a role for Africa Centre to fulfill"

"It would be good if there was a basic form of advice and information available from the Centre on immigration, leading to referrals to CRE or the ethnic minority law centre"

"For me, I'd be interested in careers information including volunteering advice; if they had jobs themselves that would be good. They don't have the manpower to help just now, but it would be good if they could help with filling in benefits forms, or advise you about approaching the job centre. In the past, when I have had problems I have gone to the CAB, but it would be good if the community could have something that's there to help them specifically"

"Basically, they should offer advice and support on areas such as immigration, housing, welfare – generally, there is a lack of support in these areas. Also they should organize more recreation and social events"

"Some people coming here might struggle with cultural issues, identify, family etc. There should be a case worker who can help you or point in the direction"

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of help. This would allow an African person to bring their issues to someone that understands them”

“It should be somewhere where Africans can pool their resources (talents and skills) that can be shared with others”

“They should get volunteers to go out into the community and meet and raise issues – if people are working hard, how can they be expected to go to the Centre?”

“Africa Centre could offer some form of outreach work to make contact with the community. It is important to do this because people can move into the area without knowing who to contact for services”

Voice of the African and Caribbean community

“Its role in representation is important. The Centre would be able to be a voice in Scotland to correct bias in reporting”

“For me, what Africa centre can do is to promote Africans and their skills. The general perception of Africa is that of the downtrodden poor”

It should promote a positive image in all respects. Collective promotion and collective empowerment is what we need. The Centre has to get its head together as a lead body and until this happens it will be difficult”

Assisting integration

“The Africa Centre should be able to get people to integrate into the community. We have to integrate whether we like it or not. Afro-Caribbean people have always integrated; they have never asked for different solutions to the same problem”

Economic development and volunteering

“We do not have economic power; Africa Centre could have a role in pushing us to getting economic power-we have the manpower and the knowledge. They should try and encourage people to start businesses”

“They should create volunteering roles so that people can gain work experience in this country. They should also provide training for those who are volunteering at Africa Centre”

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"We have highly qualified Africans but they don't get anywhere because the perception is such, and the racism is such. We need Africa Centre to promote Africans who are trapped in the system and not getting anywhere; they should tackle this perception from both ends; both from the Africans who say they can't get any work because I'm a black person; and it has to show to the outside world what Africans can offer and to show Africans what the outside world can offer, and how they can get jobs."

Campaigning

"They should campaign against racism-not just in employment applications, at work as well"

Services for children

"It would be good if they could do more for the kids, like weekend activities, playing, eating and dancing. They could maybe arrange something to allow our kids to meet other African kids".

Signposting for international students and other new entrants

"When you are coming here as a student, you have to discover the society yourself. Maybe at the beginning of their studies, students could get information about how society operates. Maybe Africa Centre could have a package on the specificities of life in Scotland"

"There is nowhere for people coming to Scotland to get information about the country. The Africa Centre should play a bigger role in providing this information and signposting would be helpful"

"When it comes to advice, Africa Centre would be a good place to go, so that when someone comes, they can be advised of what Edinburgh is like. It should be a place where, if I am a stranger, that feeling of being a stranger is removed by discussing experiences with other African people; it should be strong in these issues and create a document that covers all areas of advice, plus website links"

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Resources

In setting out how Africa Centre Scotland should respond to the needs of the community, respondents recognised that presently, the Centre was considerably resource constrained. Suggested areas for resource development included: moving towards permanent staffing; creating a full-time centre; and improving communication.

Staffing

“They need to have paid staff, because without this it won’t go very far. They should be looking to work in partnership with Community Learning and Development – linking with this group, a lot of doors will be opened”

“Currently, Africa Centre’s status with its lack of staff slows things down and doesn’t allow good partnership working. If they had staff or case workers, then that would allow us to work more closely with the Africa Centre”

“I would want to see a liaison officer role; someone who could be a link between the African Centre, the African Community and the policy makers. At the moment, they can’t really do this; they need someone with the experience to do this. That liaison officer could also do data collection to ask people what issues they wanted the Centre to deal with”

“They don’t have the capacity to do most of the things that people are demanding of it. In order to change, they need more resources and skills, not just 2 volunteers”

“Africa Centre lacks capacity; they lack manpower and training. They need training on issues that affect Africans like housing, health etc. The Centre also needs to be upgraded; and maybe they will need more space if the African population increases”

“Africa Centre needs to have a base and development workers who can cater for the specific needs of its communities. Through this it can do collaborative work with partners and build community harmony. If you don’t have a centre for the community, it is difficult for the community to feel part of the society. Therefore, I think the Centre will have a big role to play in terms of:

- *supporting*
- *building capacity*
- *supporting Africans to integrate with the host country.*

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“Other ethnic communities have a centre; the only community that doesn’t is the African community. If you are talking about the Centre supporting the community, developing partnerships, integrating the community, building capacity etc, you need to have a centre; you need to have the ability plan. You need to have case workers who will collate the data and who will feed the data from their day to day meetings into research and recommendations, and into policy. Without this, you cannot do anything”

“I can’t believe how small the African Centre is. We need a bigger space to allow a bigger range of activities. There are some people here on their own that would like to use the Centre for social activities, but it’s really too small just now”

Communication

“They need to change the way they reach out to the community. I am very sure if you ask the newer migrants they will tell you very little about the Africa Centre; I only know about them because I work in the community. It has a low profile, because of the way they have done things in the past which for some people has got unpleasant legacies”

“They should be part and parcel of the running of international offices in universities or colleges that have a good number of African and Caribbean students. As a student, you really, really need something like the Africa Centre where you can meet other Africans”

“A journal should be issued to all Africans giving them information on things like child minding, child care, and inviting people to write on other issues”

Branding

“Maybe they should also think about re-branding in order to re-build trust, because for me, the moment you mention Africa Centre it can be linked to some bad experiences in the past.”

E. Conclusions and recommendations

In this section, we set our conclusions and recommendations.

Conclusions

The consultation has identified a need within the African and Caribbean community for additional community support and representation across a wide range of issues. Africa Centre Scotland is considered by the community to have the potential to fulfil this role.

However, Africa Centre Scotland, in its current form, is considered to lack resources (staff, training, and facilities) to fully deliver the level of support and representation needed by the community.

The consultation has highlighted a number of significant challenges facing the African and Caribbean community living in Edinburgh and Lothian. In summary, the key ones are:

- Equal access to employment opportunities
- Clearer access to health services
- Tackling discrimination towards the community
- Improved representation and a voice for African and Caribbean people.

With additional resources, the community considers that Africa Centre Scotland could help African and Caribbean people address these challenges. This would require – apart from new resources - a clear vision for the organisation that included all the peoples of Africa the Caribbean, as well as those with an interest in the affairs African and Caribbean people.

Recommendations

We would recommend that Africa Centre Scotland's management committee uses the information contained in this report about community needs, plus the observations made about the current limitations of the Centre, to develop its capacity to serve the community's needs. As noted elsewhere in this report, any capacity building approach will need to give due consideration to the future vision, as well as the purpose, of Africa Centre.